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*Names have been changed for reasons of privacy.

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Occupation _____

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❒ Medium
❒ Large

Attractiveness:
❒ V. Attractive
❒ Attractive
❒ Average

Your Personality

Tick which traits closely describe you

❒ Affectionate ❒ Fashionable
❒ Serious ❒ Practical
❒ Considerate ❒ Conventional
❒ Shy ❒ Reliable
❒ Romantic ❒ Adventurous

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Please tick for a liking, cross for a dislike or leave blank for no pref.

❒ Wining/Dining ❒ Jazz/Folk music
❒ Pubs ❒ Classical music
❒ Sports/Keep fit ❒ Theatre/Arts
❒ Politics/History ❒ Watching TV
❒ Reading ❒ Smoking
❒ Travelling ❒ Mixing with friends
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Tick for yes, cross for no or leave blank if you don't feel strongly

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Marital Status:

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❒ Don't mind

Build:
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Attractiveness:
❒ V. Attractive
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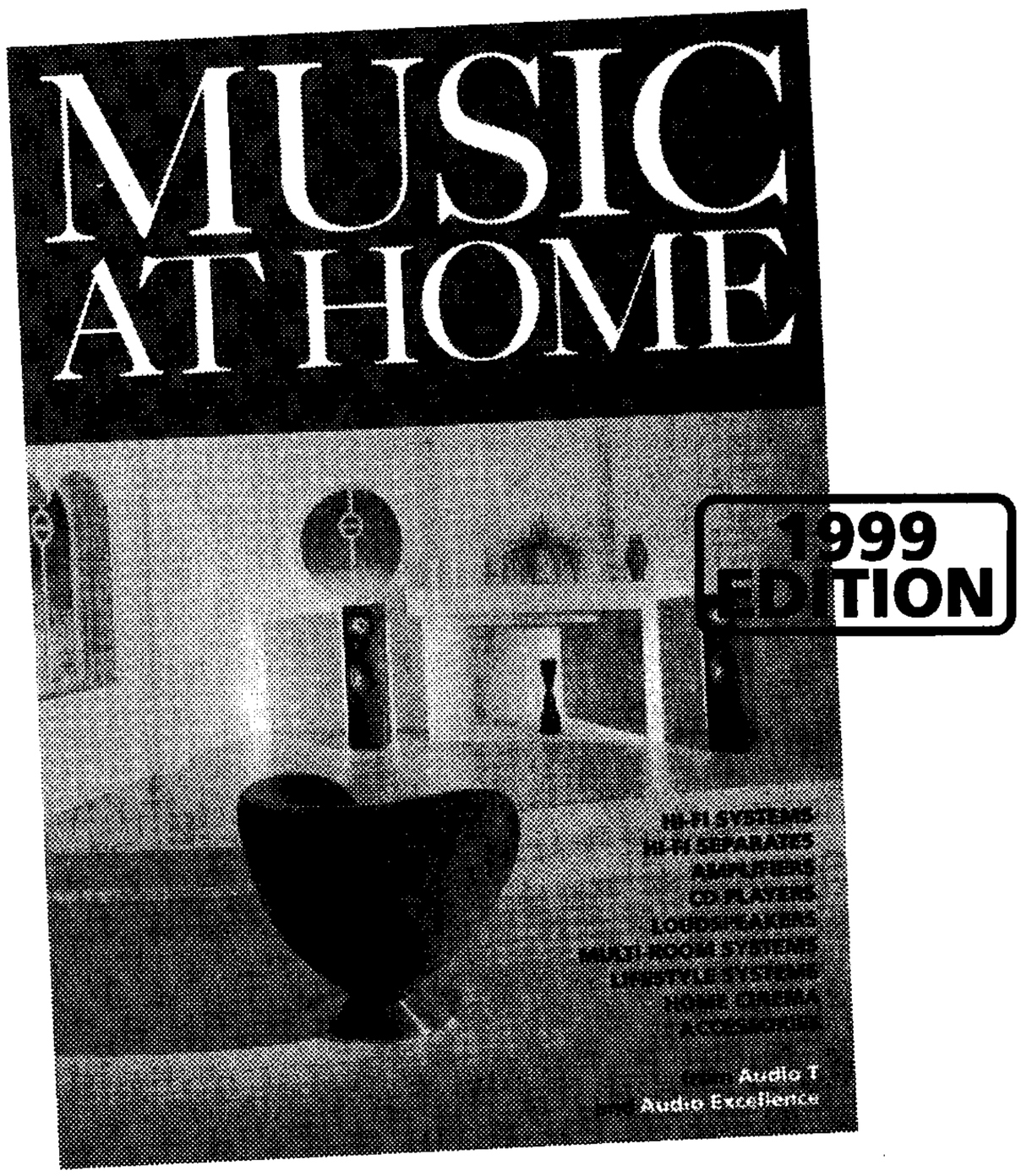

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Gnome

THERE is no greater problem in Britain today than the menace of drugs, with thousands of innocent people dying every minute as a result of this evil trade.

That is why my newspaper, the Gnome of the World, stands firmly behind our reporter Mr Larry Filth who bravely dressed up as a cocained-addicted Arabian camel in order to lure the 18th Earl of hardup (417th in line to the throne) into incriminating himself in a sordid scene in a London Hotel.

Our investigation, which cost £1 million (including the camel outfit), was in the highest tradition of investigative reporting, as a result of which one of the country's top drug barons was let off scott-free.

We stand by our story and we warn wrongdoers, however obscure or innocent, that wherever there is injustice we will send in Larry Filth, alias Sheikh Al-Cracki the Magnificent, alias Coco the Clown, alias Pope Innocent III, alias Sammy the Goldfish, to flush them out once and for all.

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c/o Sting House
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"What's my view like, Mr Campbell?"

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CONSUMER PRESS

COLOUR SECTION

AFTER running a piece in the last *Eye* suggesting that Lord Irvine, the lord chancellor, would be embarrassed when he attended the 12th Commonwealth law conference in Malaysia, we received the following letter:

Sir,

Letter from Malaysia (17 September) was wrong in saying that the Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine, is visiting Kuala Lumpur. He's not.

Yours sincerely,
ALAN PERCIVAL,
Director of Communications, Lord Chancellor's Dept.

This typically disingenuous letter from Lord Irvine's spin doctor fails to explain why the lord chancellor was *not* there. Several thousand Commonwealth lawyers also wanted to know as they waited vainly in Kuala Lumpur for his talk on Human Rights in the Millennium – "Tuesday 14th September, 5.00pm – Special address by the Lord Chancellor of Great Britain", as the official programme billed it.

Lord Irvine pulled out of the keynote speech at the last minute while keeping an appointment in Beijing the day before – Monday, 13 September – to sign an agreement for "legal co-operation" with the mass murderers of Tiananmen Square.

The mysteries of Irvine's Asian travels (he appeared in Singapore – only 20 minutes from Kuala Lumpur – on the very morning he was meant to speak) seem attributable to our new "ethical" foreign policy: suck up to China (where it's a serious crime to incite democracy) and say absolutely nothing to upset Malaysia, where the good Dr Mahartir is oversensitive to criticisms for jailing Anwar Ibrahim not to mention an increasing number of lawyers and journalists. A lecture on human rights from the lord chancellor might have risked the cancellation of some enormously valuable armaments contracts.

IN the spirit of millennial cross-party co-operation, the contract for cleaning the Greenwich dome was awarded on 16 August to LI Group.

The parent company of LI Group is LI Holdings, which until 1998 was known as Merton Investments. In turn, the principal shareholders of Merton Investments are listed as Chesterlake Ltd and Saba Holdings Ltd, both of which give the same address in Belize – that of a certain Mr Michael Anthony Ashcroft.

ONE British company watching events unfold in Dili and Jakarta with enormous interest is the multinational mining outfit Rio Tinto.

Its heavy investment throughout the archipelago and neighbouring Papua New Guinea would be seriously threatened by any surge towards independence. Fortunately Rio Tinto has some powerful friends circulating around the government.

Lord Simon of Highbury, minister of state for trade and industry, used to be a Rio Tinto board member, though he gave that up along with his interests in BP before going into government. And the founders of lobbying firm Prima, Liberal Democrat peer Lord Holme and "Lobbygate" veteran Roger Liddle, are also Tinto fans. Holme sat on the company's board, while Liddle handled Rio Tinto's parliamentary affairs through Prima until he moved into his current position as a Downing Street policy wonk.

Strictly speaking Liddle continued on the Prima brief for another couple of weeks after his appointment, during a period when he was allowed to wear two, supposedly strictly exclusive, hats in order to "tidy things up" at his old workplace. But he put it all behind him and concentrated on his new post as prime ministerial adviser where one of his first duties was to sit in on a working breakfast with Tony Blair and a representative from... Rio Tinto.

"SOME people have criticised the PFI for involving the private sector," wrote health secretary Frank Dobson, launching the new South Tees Hospital PFI scheme. "They conveniently ignore the facts. Who do critics think have been building hospitals before PFI? Charities or volunteers? Of course not. They were built by the same profit-making private construction companies now involved in PFI."

This interesting new argument suggests Dobson cannot see the difference between hiring a plumber to put in your new bathroom, and letting the plumber take over your entire house on condition he rents it back to you for the next 30 years – and paying him extra to do your cooking and cleaning. To help the confused health secretary, here are three "conveniently ignored facts" about South Tees PFI (private finance initiative).

The new hospital is being built by Mowlem and Carrillion – the company formerly known as Tarmac. Carrillion was strongly criticised recently by independent think tank Labour Research as one of the firms most commonly using "union busting" to get round the government's fairness at work proposals.

Carillion, then Tarmac, was prime contractor on the first PFI hospital, Dartford and Gravesham. The national audit office (NAO) said this scheme was certainly no cheaper, and possibly more expensive, than a traditional rebuild.

The old South Tees hospital had 1,051 beds for patients. The brand spanking new PFI one will have beds for 980.

***SUNDAY TELEGRAPH*, 26 September, pp. 24-25: double page advert for computer firm EDS.**

Sunday Telegraph, 26 September, p. 14: "A campaign to persuade millions of poor people to claim more benefits is to be postponed by the government because its computers cannot cope."

This inability to cope surely has nothing to do with the leading supplier for the Benefits Agency's ACCORD (Access to Corporate Data) scheme – none other than EDS?

● *Hackwatch: For Whom The Bel Toils* 7
● *Platform ishoos: Labour conference special* 8
● *PLUS In The Back — Isaac Kaye, another Labour donor kebabbed; Breakdown at the AA; Norwood and Geraghty, a tale of two security risks; and Mr McIntosh — wrong man for the rights job.* 26-27

"Scarecrow? No, that's the farmer"

Street of Shame

JAMES HEWITT, "Diana's kiss 'n' tell love traitor" has been shopped again – this time by "film producer" Jill Everett who "looked uncannily like Princess Diana when Hewitt seduced her" and who subsequently flogged all the "3-in-a-bed and a rabbit fur glove" details to a grateful *News of the Screws*.

Hewitt had approached Everett with a deal to produce *Diana: The Movie*, a project based almost entirely on those infamous letters, "laying bare every searingly intimate detail of his royal affair", letters that "he so piously promised not to reveal" (*Screws*, 19 September). Negotiations about the film flopped and discussions of a more Ugandan nature took place with alarming speed – until it all went wrong.

Everett's decision to kiss 'n' tell was based on far more than the fat wad of News International cash offered, or her touching distaste for Hewitt and his vile habits. Hewitt had also broken a business promise – a fact the *Screws* was keen to highlight amid its romp*fest* copy: "The last straw came when she discovered that Hewitt had secretly arranged to do a TV interview behind her back" about the letters. This is what forced Everett to exact revenge by revealing all to the *Screws*, which boasted: "Today the *News of the World* does to him what he planned to do to Diana: expose *his* deepest secrets."

Alas there was no space in the three-page exposure for the *Screws* to reveal who else might have secretly bid for those intimate letters. One rag in particular led early efforts to help Hewitt in his mission to expose the princess's deepest secrets by signing a £400,000 contract with him, only to be pipped at the post by a *Mail on Sunday* offer of £600,000. The identity of this victim of another broken business promise? Why, the *News of the Screws* of course!

THE *Sunday People* tried desperately to squeeze one last gasp out of the Hewitt affair with its "World Exclusive" on 12 September.

It detailed how the Princess of Wales had offered James Hewitt, the "cold hearted cad" who was once her lover, thousands of pounds in return for the letters she had sent him during their affair. This was according to one Simone Simmonds, "the princess' spiritual healer and close friend", who decided to "break her silence over the Hewitt affair because she is furious that he is still trying to make money out of Diana".

She is presumably therefore unrelated to the Simone Simmonds whose own book *Diana: The Secret Years*, detailing in full the princess's various affairs, was published earlier this year, provoking rather less interest than Hewitt's.

ADVERTS for the millennium dome in the national press promise "One amazing day", but the delights on offer during this once-in-a-lifetime sojourn vary between publications.

Ads in the *Times* and other newspapers on Wednesday 22 September call on the public to: "Walk through a human body. Change your face at the touch of a button." Readers of magazines such as *Time Out* are offered a slightly more tantalising prospect: "Walk through a human body. Have an instant sex change."

The New Millennium press office admits all to the *Eye*. "The initial batch of ads went out saying have an instant sex change, but we bottled out. We sat down and thought about the wording and so for the press ads we revised it because we didn't want that becoming the central publicity issue."

"The sex change may however make a reappearance," they add.

PRIVATE I-I-I

***PRIVATE EYE*'s award to the nation's most self-obsessed columnist goes this week to Geoff Dyer, who wrote on the important subject of his favourite hat for the never-frivolous *Guardian* G2 section.**

In the space of two columns, Mr Dyer managed a staggering 51 uses of the first person pronoun – an "I" rating of 3.6 per column-inch.

Nominated by Cathy Gere. £10 paid for entries.

SEVERAL broadsheets, including the *Times*, the *Observer* and the *Independent on Sunday*, carried a notice over the weekend announcing a £5,000 annual journalism award in honour of Martha Gellhorn, the late, great war reporter and ex-Mrs Ernest Hemingway who died in February 1998.

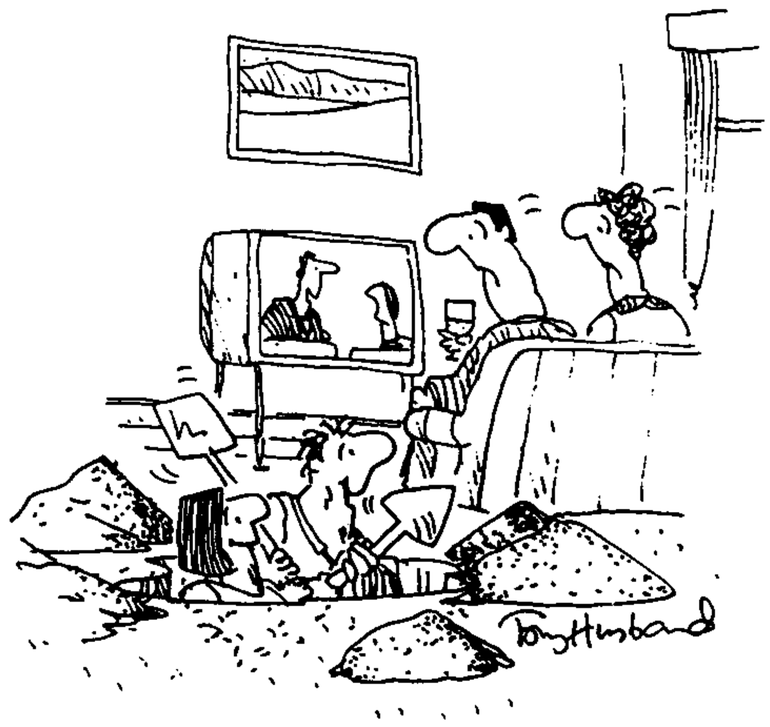
Readers of the *Sindie* may have experienced a sense of déjà vu: had not that paper announced a similar award last year? Indeed it had: and two of the judges of the earlier award, James Fox and Victoria Glendinning, appear on the list of judges for the new one. So what happened to "The Martha Gellhorn award for best young war reporter of the year" announced in the *Sindie* just a week after Gellhorn's death?

The answer lies in the name of a member of the earlier judging panel who is absent from the current one: Rosie Boycott. For it was Boycott, as editor of the *Independent* titles, who rushed to set up the Gellhorn award within days of her "mentor's" death. She weepily told staff "she was like a mother to me" and was recorded by TV fly-on-the-wall documentary cameras fighting back tears in an editorial conference after hearing the news of Gellhorn's demise.

But Boycott left to edit the *Daily Express* shortly afterwards. Numerous calls and letters to her from Fox, Glendinning and Gellhorn's son Alex Matthews, inquiring about the future of the award, went unanswered. Everyone at the Indie seemed to have forgotten about it, too. Eventually Fox and Co decided to start all over again without Boycott – who appeared to have left her enthusiasm for Martha Gellhorn behind at Canary Wharf along with her office cannabis plant.

THE atmosphere is strained on Planet Janet. Hacks at the *Sindie*, loyal to their new mistress, Janet Street-Porter, are in a huff with colleagues at the daily *Independent*.

Daily hacks have come up with an unkind nickname for JS-P and her deputy at the cutting-edge of modern journalism, Michael Williams: "George and Mildred".



"Yoo-hoo! Surprise!"

ON 22 AUGUST *Observer* hack Ed Vulliamy wrote a four-page special feature on the case of Wen Ho Lee, a former scientist at America's Los Alomos nuclear laboratories who was alleged to have spied for China.

Alas! By 30 August *Newsweek* reported that the case had "suffered a meltdown" as the prospect of Lee facing any charges was rapidly vanishing.

Readers might have expected Britain's leading liberal Sunday newspaper to be more cautious before presuming Lee's guilt, since miscarriages of justice are not unknown in the US. A fortnight before Vulliamy's piece appeared, the *Nation* magazine in New York – America's equivalent to the *New Stoadsperson* – was already describing Lee as "the spy who wasn't", pointing out that his supposedly mysterious trips to China had been approved by the energy department.

Apart from three lines noting Lee's denial of the accusations, Vulliamy didn't raise any doubts about the allegations in his 12-column epic. But he did have space for some lovely cliches: "Zen-like", "Chinese puzzle", and "Chinese riddle" – though not, oddly enough, "inscrutable".

POETRY CORNER

ONLY the best and the brightest are allowed to join Mensa, whose distinguished members include Garry Bushell, Sir Clive Sinclair and Victor Serebriakoff, contributing editor of the madly right-wing magazine *Right Now!*

To see if you are fit to join the exalted elite, study this poem by one David Griffths, published in the October issue of *London Mensa News*:

I am sick of moaning morons
And of cretins' wailing cries
And whining scum who pour on
The worsted's sorry sighs.
The best would best be throwing
The seed the worst are sowing
To the prussic winds for blowing
To the fire where rebirth lies.
I want to close the door on
The locust swarms that rise
At the front of winds that lure on
A seed plague from dark skies...

It may be worth noting that Zyklon-B – the poison gas used in Nazi death-chambers – was hydrocyanic, or prussic, acid fumes. Now, using your skill and judgement, can you guess what Griffiths is trying to say?

SAD ladette Denise Van Outen induced mild schizophrenia in the *Independent* recently when she appeared on the front of its magazine.

"Watch this face" was the caption accompanying the unusually modest cover shot, while the guff inside plugged her staggeringly pisspoor new show, *Something for the Weekend*.

The *Indie*'s TV supplement took a rather different view of her late night outing on Channel 4, however. As it commented: "Don't ask what Denise Van Outen has done to deserve this..."

JULIE BURCHILL's impassioned critique of men, British institutions and men who are British institutions in the *Guardian Weekend* on Saturday 25 September might have been more convincing had she not been quite so cavalier with the facts.

In between Kenneth Branagh, the National Farmers' Union, the Archers, P.G. Wodehouse and Ted Hughes, she directed her spleen at the unfortunate George Orwell.

"It turns out he [Orwell] was working for the CIA all through the 50s, fingering fellow writers as Communist sympathisers." La Burchill must be congratulated for revealing the first spy who came back from the grave: Orwell died in January 1950 from a tubercular haemorrhage.

THERE is no sign of a ceasefire in the long-running feud between *Sunday People* editor Neil "Wolfman" Wallis and Dr Vernon Coleman, his resident agony uncle.

In his column of 19 September Coleman was answering a 22-stone reader who had trouble squeezing into airline seats. "Stop whingeing," he advised, pointing out that there were far worse misfortunes in life. For instance: "The editor of the *Sunday People* is a trifle over three foot tall and has to carry a box when he goes to football matches."

Although Coleman – who is a towering 6'4" in his stockinged feet – has a "don't change a comma" clause in his contract, nervous subs removed the offending sentence. Scanning the page proofs from his Mediterranean hideaway, the doc blew a fuse and demanded it be restored.

Eventually the Wolfman himself was asked to adjudicate. The last time Coleman nearly departed, Wallis had to hand out a handsome pay rise to keep him – having belatedly discovered that the column is hugely if inexplicably popular with readers. Although he resents Coleman's six-figure salary and bumptious manner, he dare not risk losing him again. And so, through gritted teeth, the editor delivered his verdict: "Publish and belittle."

BIN WATCH

BENJY "BINMAN" PELL will appear at Blackfriars crown court on 22 November to face five counts of stealing rubbish.

Pell has pleaded not guilty to the theft of documentary waste belonging to Harkavys solicitors in Harley Street on 1, 5, 19, 22 and 26 February.

HACKWATCH

Bel Of The Balls

IN the *Daily Mail* two weeks ago, "top writer" Bel Mooney chose 50 people and items "that really portray the quintessence of Britishness".

The list included Prince William, Bovril, Kate Moss, Yorkshire pudding and Nigel Kennedy. She even found room for Richard Dimbleby ("his broadcasting career is a Media Studies 'must'"), though she forgot to mention that she happens to be married to his son.

One name, however, was modestly absent — that of Bel herself. Here are just a few reasons she is our greatest national treasure:

4 March 1999: "Home, in the broadest sense, is the most important thing in my life," Bel declares in the *Daily Telegraph*. So, naturally enough, she has hired a feng shui expert, Gail Davis, to sort out the vibes in her farmhouse and put it in tune with "the wind and the waves". Gail advises that the front door should be painted yellow instead of green, and that Bel's desk be moved to the more "auspicious" end of her study. "Oh no! What a load of old nonsense," grumbles Bel's husband, Jonathan Dimbleby. Bel disagrees. "My home is pulsating with even more chi than before," she reveals ecstatically.

19 March: Bel reviews Maeve Haran's new novel in the *Daily Mail*. All seems to be going well until she reaches a passage about a road protest. "With my own teenage daughter I was deeply involved in such a protest in 1994, and know that Haran's scenario doesn't stand up," she harrumphs. "A road route switched just like that, because of bad publicity and an accident? I don't think so." Haran is accused of "not bothering to get to grips with the issues" — unlike the reviewer and her daughter.

17 May: Yet another slab of autobiography, this time in article on the *Mail*'s leader page. "As a 'child of the Sixties', I have never been ashamed to champion liberal values," Bel boasts. "Over the years, as a journalist, novelist and children's author and now scriptwriter, too, I have been addressing all those subjects in different ways. I have repeated my belief as a feminist that young girls have to be taught self-worth... I have written honestly about the difficulties and joys of marriage..." Well done!

Now, however, Bel finds herself turning into Mary Whitehouse. "Hey — I feel I must say — I'm not a fuddy-duddy! I use a computer, like motorbikes, read the pop pages and believe that great sex between consenting adults is nobody's business but their own." Even so, when she reads about trendy teachers or permissive parents, "I start to howl".

24 May: In 1994 Bel was derided for camping in a yurt with her 14-year-old daughter, Kitty, to protest against the Swainswick-Batheaston bypass. Five years on, she argues in the *Times* that it was "one of the most significant events of the Nineties". Strangers accost her in trains to say how brave she was — to which Bel modestly replies that "I was only one of many". And yet, in retrospect, even she is amazed at her own courage. "At 47, I had written for every national newspaper and certainly knocked around. Yet I chose to peg myself out on a rock with my heart exposed and quivering..."

There's another gratifying legacy. "Maybe one day I will be showing Kitty's child pictures of how England was at the millennium. She will shake her head at my tales, asking: 'What did you do in the ecowar, granny?' I shall be proud to say: 'For a while, sweetheart, I was on the front line'."

30 June: Bel goes to Glastonbury. "There I was, part of the Woodstock generation, 'still crazy after all these years'," she raves in the *Daily Telegraph*. "For this brief moment, as the world turned towards the millennium, we were all dancing to the same tune." Except Bel, apparently, who is appalled by the crush, the thudding bass and the dazzling lights — not to mention the "drunks, druggies, no-hopers, extremely dodgy types". Perhaps Glyndebourne might be a safer bet next year.

27 July: In a feature for her local paper, the *Bath Chronicle*, Bel lists some of her favourite things: "Marbled notebooks for writing in, a colourful rug 'to bring joy to the heart', an ammonite to contemplate the inexorable rolling of time and a mound of antique textile cushions to loll on while reading beautifully bound editions of classic books." Scrumptious.

28 July: Sophie Rhys-Jones has been photographed for *Hello!* at her nephew's christening; Posh and Becks have sold their wedding pictures to *OK!* magazine. "What on earth has become of us?" Bel wails in the *Daily Mail*. "Am I alone in finding this utterly repellent?" She argues that the real curse of *Hello!* is "insidiously to persuade us that there is a price for everything, that privacy is as out of date as the idea of the sacred". How very true: in the same day's *Guardian*, for instance, a "desk therapist" inspects Jonathan Dimbleby's study, concluding that he's a clever chap who works too hard. "It's spookily accurate," Bel confesses. "I've been telling him to take a holiday for 31 years."

10 August: "English literature is my birthright," Bel announces in the *Times*. "Years ago I taught for a while; now as author of books for teenagers I visit many schools; as a mother I have played hostess to crowds of young people." Well done again! And her expert opinion? "For me there is no argument: studying Shakespeare is better than studying Irvine Welsh."

11 August: The *Daily Mail* proudly publishes "a memorable account of why the eclipse is so important". It's a dispatch from Bel, huddled in a tent in Cornwall. "I confess that when I realised that in Cornwall the eclipse will occur at the 11th minute of the 11th hour of the 11th day, I felt a shiver," she writes. "There was an apocalyptic ring to that timing that felt like more than coincidence. Remembering Nostradamus's prophecy that at this eclipse 'the monster will appear in broad daylight', I close my eyes and imagine..."

1 September: In a *Guardian* feature about modern eating habits, Bel seizes the chance to invade her family's privacy once more. "My children have never been allowed to eat in front of the television, and if I say dinner is at 8pm, they'll be there without a peep."

22 September: Bel pens a two-page feature for the *Daily Mail* about her daughter, Kitty. "As a writer, I know the worst book review in the world is not half so bad as my daughter's harsh tongue... she is Saffy to my Edina-Patsy mix." Nevertheless, "in truth, I think I've been a darn good mother". Very well done indeed! But now comes the bad news. "We are approaching that sweetly painful rite of passage — the day the youngest leaves the nest for the next stage. In Kitty's case this is to be Warwick University, but it could be anywhere. It is the going that matters..." Indeed it is: with no Kitty to fall back on, what will Bel find to write about?

"Don't deny it, Goldilocks – we found traces of porridge in your blood"

POLICE 5

MERSEYSIDE's new chief constable Norman Bettison is a forward-looking copper: young, smart and a graduate. So respected is he now that he gets appointed to investigate alleged malpractices in other forces and is currently looking into allegations of misconduct against the chief constable of Warwickshire.

Unfortunately Bettison himself seems to have inherited a force on Merseyside which is incapable of behaving itself. Past "misdemeanours" cannot be laid at Norman's door of course, but he faces a severe test of judgement over how to handle the behaviour of his force's operational support group (OSD).

The OSD, aka the "snatch squad", is trained to deal with riots. On the afternoon of Saturday 11 September it turned up unexpectedly in Liverpool city centre. Seeing no rioting in progress, it duly proceeded to start one.

Liverpool fans had been drowning their sorrows all afternoon after their team lost to Manchester United. Although neutral observers reported that their mood was boisterous, no violence had taken place and Man Utd fans had long gone home. Insults were hurled at the OSD, however - and they were met by a bizarrely over-the-top reaction. Several city centre pubs were stormed with customers receiving a good beating. A man in a wheelchair and a 15-year-old boy were among those on the wrong end of the OSD batons.

In the aftermath some off-duty policemen who had been present came forward to give evidence against their OSD colleagues. One claimed he was laughed at by an OSD man when he asked him to radio for an ambulance for the injured boy. Yet it will be difficult to identify any miscreants from among the OSD because most wore black scarves over their faces.

Bettison's reaction has been to mount an internal inquiry in which Merseyside police will investigate itself. He has asked members of the public who claim to have been assaulted to cooperate with his team. So far he has received no takers. Wary of a whitewash, the OSD victims are following legal advice and suing the force instead. It could be fruitful. Last week a man assaulted by the OSD in 1997 was awarded £24,700 damages while another received £10,000 in an out of court settlement.

RADIO DAZE

***MIRROR* showbiz hack Matthew Wright has been crowing over an unfortunate appearance on Derek Hatton's "excellent" Talk Radio phone-in show by his *Sun* rival Dominic Mohan.**

Despite Degsy's repeated urgings, absolutely nobody rang in to ask Mohan a question.

Predictably, Mohan asked that a non-existent fault with the phones be blamed for what one of Hatton's assistants described as "our worst phone-in ever, a complete duck... highly embarrassing". Equally predictably, Wright blamed the *Sun* hack's vile personality. But while it's true that no one apart from PR's Matthew Freud would really want to speak to him, there is another explanation: Talk Radio's audience is disappearing.

Kelvin Mackenzie's erratic programming has lost the phone-in addicts he inherited from the previous regime without gaining new listeners. Those disgruntled by the constant sackings and schedule changes have even set up a Save Talk Radio website to denigrate Mackenzie and his presenters. Helpfully the site (www.newmalden.com/talk-radio/index.html) gives Kelvin's direct line so listeners can ring with suggestions, a gesture he must appreciate.

The complainers are, however, wasting their time. Rupert Murdoch's investment in Mackenzie's holding company effectively underwrites the entire venture, enabling Talk to borrow almost unlimited sums to buy up any commercial radio stations that come on the market.

This expansion will add further to Talk's losses, but for Murdoch it's a small price to pay. Mackenzie has already bid up the price of live sports coverage, making life difficult for the BBC's Five Live. And if he succeeds in building a network of local stations, he can drop ITN's Independent Radio News in favour of an audio feed from Sky News, with obvious financial consequences for the existing news supplier.

In reality Talk Radio now exists not to attract listeners or advertisers but to put the squeeze on Murdoch's commercial rivals.

George Michael is more than a rock star. He is a spokesman for a generation... In his interview with us he shows both honesty and integrity. We're definitely on the same wavelength as him when he talks about public opinion.

Sun Editorial

£10 paid for entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

BOURNEMOUTH SPECIAL

HEIGH HO! Heigh ho! It's off to Bournemouth they go. And with "new" Labour's top brass safely marshalled behind the crash barriers of the town's cheerless conference centre, Tony's cabinet has taken a collective vow of trappism.

On pain of death, or internal exile, each cabinet member has been ordered not to mention the words "public spending". Just to make sure they don't, Alastair Campbell will cast his eye over ministerial speeches before they are delivered to delegates.

But this has not prevented muttering in some quarters. For, say some braver souls, this self-denying ordinance would never have had to be delivered had the Dear Leader himself not strayed from his speech to the TUC a fortnight ago.

Back then, having surveyed the ranks of glum, foot-shuffling trade unionists from his rostrum, Blair decided he had to rescue his dull speech or see it bomb. He duly abandoned his notes and informed the Brothers and Sisters that it was "their job to demand more", while startling the by now fully alert TUC delegates, in announcing that the pensioners "deserved more" and the minimum wage "should be higher".

Upon hearing the Dear Leader's stab at Old Labour rhetoric, the chancellor's brow became more deeply furrowed and he was deeply troubled. Hence Gordon Brown's edict to high spending departments, and the Dear Leader's subsequent rediscovery of the chancellor's old friend, Prudence, just in time for Bournemouth.

GOVERNMENT ministers, used to glancing at each other only fleetingly at cabinet meetings, were last week delighted to learn that their busy diaries were to be put aside for a "cabinet away day".

The idea came from one those go ahead business organisations Mr Tony so admires. But no one thought to tell the PM that in the real world of business "away days", employees vie to invent the most fabulous excuses to avoid the toadying and transparent "bonding sessions" where people who hate each other pretend to like one another.

Still, the "cabinet away day" got off to a good start until John Reid, the gritty secretary of state for Scotland and former defence minister, helpfully asked the PM what "lasting damage" he thought "the Drapergate affair had done to the government?"

This entirely unwelcome and untimely question did, however, have a purpose. The former lobbyist and motormouth Derek Draper is immutably linked to his former employer Peter Mandelson, whom Tony desperately wants back in cabinet. But such was the hatred for Mandy among his former colleagues that it was soon apparent that Reid had spoken for everyone. When Tony left the room, Reid was immediately congratulated for his interjection. The "bonding session" had not been in vain.

OPPORTUNITIES for conference delegates in Bournemouth to make policy have now been whittled down to four "contemporary motions" by "new" Labour's thought police.

The new arrangements, which sentence once lively Labourites to a conference menu of dull seminars with on-message ministers, are constantly referred to, and always with necessary gravity, as being part of Labour's new "Partnership in Power" arrangements. Yet the "contemporary resolutions", in themselves but a sad rump of Labour's once riotous conferences, are heavily policed.

The even more quaintly titled "Conference Arrangements Committee" subsequently weeds out any truly "contemporary" and therefore troublesome resolution. Imagine the horror of the assembled trustees when the powerful GMB union submitted a resolution demanding the government increase public spending, since Gordon Brown currently presides over a record surplus, while also telling Tony Blair not to promise tax cuts to the middle classes.

Since the GMB is not a piddling little local Labour party, its motion couldn't simply be dumped, and Downing Street went into a tailspin. Fortunately help was at hand in the shape of Ian Mackenzie, a bearded former Spart from Lewisham, who miraculously managed to submit an alternative resolution from his local party congratulating the government and Gordon Brown for their record of financial rectitude, while opposing the GMB's ludicrous demands.

Coincidentally Mackenzie has a day job – as adviser to Labour's chief whip, Ann Taylor.

LEADING "human rights" campaigner Ann Clwyd MP is now facing court action in respect of her own human rights record. A founder-director of the London-based, US-funded organisation Indict, which Clwyd chairs, is suing her for wrongful dismissal.

Indict, which has an annual budget of $3m, was formed last year to bring Iraqi war criminals to justice, but has so far failed to do anything of the sort. When Saddam Hussein's deputy, Izzat Ibrahim al-Douri, fled back to Baghdad from a Vienna clinic last month, it was not because Indict had mobilised a campaign to have him tried for his part in the massacre of Iraqi Kurds.

As soon as his presence in Austria for medical treatment became known, Indict's deputy director Clive Furness wanted to get in touch with the Austrian authorities at once and try to have al-Douri arrested. But Clwyd, who was sailing in Wales, forbade staff at Indict to contact their own legal committee or the people in Vienna who were responsible for presenting evidence to the prosecutor's office. By the time she returned, a week later, the Iraqi number two had done a bunk. Clwyd then gave Furness notice to quit, after he refused her proposal that he take a £4,000 cut in salary – whereupon he announced that he would see her in court.

On hearing of the lawsuit, one member of the Indict board was heard to reflect on the irony that, with all its money, the first court case that Indict should be involved in was an action for wrongful dismissal by one of its own staff.

GERALD HOWARTH, the Tory MP and family-values crusader, was in top form during *Newsnight*'s recent discussion about sex and censorship: country going to the dogs, streets awash with pornography, all most deplorable, etc, etc.

Afterwards, he advanced on his fellow-guest Rowan Pelling, gorgeous pouting editrix of the *Erotic Review*, to ask what a nice girl like her was doing in such a beastly business. Within a minute or two, however, he was shyly requesting her to send him a copy of the magazine in a plain brown wrapper – purely in the interests of thorough research, of course.

It seems Howarth isn't the only politico to take an interest in Ms Pelling's publications. After a recent late-night show as Carlton TV, Derek Draper was heard to ask a young journalist: "Have you ever masturbated over a porn mag?" Young journalist, somewhat abashed: "Er, well, I suppose I might have..." Dolly Draper, with great pride: "The last time I masturbated over a magazine, it was the Erotic Print Society Catalogue."

BEST ANTI-GORDON CONFERENCE JOKE

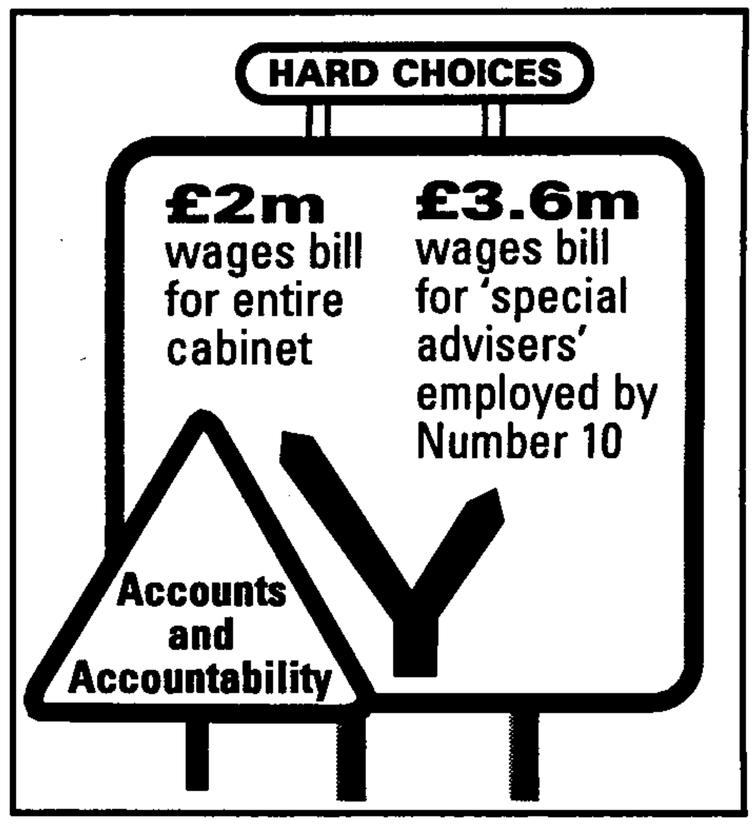
"SURELY no one can doubt that Sarah Macauley has met the five conditions of entry... but still Gordon dithers."

© A spin doctor at Bournemouth

IN December 1997 James Winston, a former Labour councillor in Tony Blair's Barnsbury ward in Islington, was convicted of fraudulently obtaining £8,000 worth of housing benefit.

He was swiftly left out in the cold by the party, but at the time the *Eye* noted that MP Kate Hoey, another exile from Ulster who had worked closely with Winston in the Northern Irish "Democracy Now" pressure group, had failed to comment on her friend's case (*Eye* 941). This was despite her position as PPS to welfare reform minister Frank Field, then engaged on a "get tough" campaign against, er, housing benefit fraud.

Less than two years on, however, it would appear that Winston has been rehabilitated: he is organising a breakfast reception at this week's party conference to promote Northern Ireland. Guests of honour lined up



for Winston's "Ulster Fry" include MPs Alan Johnson, Calum MacDonald and Shona McIsaac, but a special place at the breakfast table is being reserved for a ministerial guest... Kate Hoey.

OH, YEAH?

The 62-year-old chairwoman of the Tory party's Regent's Park South branch maintained that despite a red light in the window and an advertisement offering 'blonde, sexy model' on the front door, she had collected rent from the [Soho] premises without realising it was a bordello.

— *Evening Standard,* 20 September

A LETTER has been sent out to Tarmac employees around the country urging them to write to their MPs to influence government road building policy.

A letter to workers from managing director Keith Bryan includes two draft letters and a list of MPs and their constituencies. In his letter Bryan calls for "a recognition of the need to improve our roads network for the economic and environmental good of the nation".

The draft letter makes it perfectly clear, however, that improving the nation's environment comes second to preserving Tarmac's own market. "The continuing threat to the roads programme could have a serious impact upon individuals like myself," employees are urged to write.

Any mention of the desire to avoid a serious impact on Tarmac's profits is carefully avoided.

BACK BYTES

THE revised IR 35 tax regulations announced on 23 September have failed to reassure many in the information technology (IT) sector that their industry will not suffer. But the *Eye's* old friends at EDS are perfectly happy with the plans.

The measures will be introduced in April to prevent "disguised employment" – workers declaring themselves self-employed while effectively working full-time for a company and enjoying all the benefits that entails – precisely the way in which many IT experts operate.

David Ramsden, director of the Professional Contractors Group (PCG), an organisation set up to raise awareness of the potential effects of the regulations, has written to the paymaster-general Dawn Primarolo pointing out the unfair advantage over smaller competitors that will be gained by larger computer firms such as EDS.

Ramsden refers to at least one secret meeting at which certain representative groups, including EDS, were consulted – but not the PCG, even though its 3,000 members from the engineering and IT industries will be directly affected.

A study, commissioned by the PCG from the Adam Smith Institute, will this week show that IR 35 rules could cause 100,000 small companies to close.

The PCG was finally called in for a meeting on 22 September, only to be told that an announcement on the final proposals would be made the next day. Surely EDS's privileged negotiating position on a matter which could increase its already huge share of the IT market bears no relation to the various major contracts it holds with the Inland Revenue?

'Backbiter'

BRUSSELS SPROUTS

How Europe works...

THE joke response of national leaders to the problems of sleaze and "democratic deficit" within the European union (EU) was to appoint Romano Prodi — a man under investigation for fraud in his own country – as president.

With a man of Prodi's moral stature at the helm of the commission (see *Eyes* 973, 975), it is no surprise the European parliament (EP) has now become a haven for other alleged criminals (*"Gifted Euro politicians", shurely? Ed.*) from Italy in which to expand their operations.

One of the first people to pay a courtesy visit to Prodi when the parliament first assembled last summer was Silvio Berlusconi — media magnate, leader of the Forza Italia party in the European parliament and leader of the opposition in Italy. After the meeting Berlusconi pledged his political support for Prodi in the European parliament, which was curious since the two are political rivals in Italy and Prodi had ousted Berlusconi as prime minister in 1994.

The reason for Berlusconi's support soon became clear when Prodi appointed Mario Monti, one of Berlusconi's men, to the plum job of commissioner for competition and free markets. Monti was by no means the best candidate for the remaining Italian post on the commission, and nor was he particularly suited to competition and free markets. His appointment, as an Italian journalist remarked, "was like putting a fox in charge of a chicken run".

Why does Berlusconi have such an interest in this particular commission? Because he is interested in his televisions, that's why.

Berlusconi is the Rupert Murdoch of Italy, but is also allowed to own a football team and a political party. He has so far only managed to avoid jail in Italy by using his media empire to support his political party (the advertising is free and unlimited) and using his political party to support his media empire (by blocking anti-trust legislation in Italy and guaranteeing himself immunity from prosecution).

This is a conflict of interest which would be illegal in any western democracy bar Italy. Wouldn't if be amusing if, with Monti's help, Berlusconi were able to repeat the same monstrous trick in Europe? Not only would Monti *not* conduct an anti-trust investigation into Berlusconi's conflict of interest, but he would promote Berlusconi's private interests by waging a war on government subsidies to state television services — an intention, oddly enough, that he specifically declared during his recent interrogation by the European parliament. Watch this space

Berlusconi is seeking to consolidate his political control over European media by having another of his acolytes, Giuseppe Gargani, appointed vice-president of the European parliamentary committee for culture. He is also seeking an appointment for his number two, Marcello dell'Utri.

Italian magistrates have tried to suggest that the latter has some sort of link with various Sicilian gentlemen, but he has been spared the embarrassment of their interest by his election to the Italian parliament in the ranks of Forza Italia. As a reward for his services and as further protection against prosecution, dell'Utri was elected MEP in the Berlusconi electoral list. Shamelessly dell'Utri is now standing as Berlusconi's candidate for the European parliamentary committee for justice!

LOTTERY LATEST

THERE'S no business like lottery business. Few companies can afford to find an extra £5m a week for four weeks running as part of a promotional gambit – but Camelot can.

In the past month the lottery's "Superdraw Saturdays" have offered a guaranteed jackpot of £10m. But the extra cash from ticket sales during this period amounts to a weekly average of less than £4m.

Camelot says Superdraws are necessary to maintain the lottery's public profile, and claims the missing millions are made up from the "prize fund shortfall", leaving no question of money being taken away from good causes. Except that at the end of the year any money left in the shortfall fund is given to lottery charities, who will presumably expect a smaller bonus this year.

NOOKS and CORNERS

ASTON HALL is a wonderful Jacobean house and one of the great secret treasures of Britain. It is a secret not because it is owned by a Fayed or some other anti-social and unsuitable owner wilfully determined to keep people out, but because it has been swallowed up by the inner suburbs of Birmingham and the best view of it is from the Aston Expressway just south of Spaghetti Junction.

Your National Trust aesthetes would not expect to go to a city to see a fine country house, but they should: Aston Hall is magnificent.

Possibly designed by John Thorpe, it was largely built for Sir Thomas Holte between 1618 and 1635. It was among the last large such houses to be raised in England and has a fantastic skyline enlivened with fancy gables and a forest of chimneys. Inside, the glory is the long gallery, 136 feet long with a strapwork plaster ceiling, tapestries on the walls and a polished wobbly timber floor shimmering like the sea.

It is altogether an amazing survival, for the manor of Aston was sold in 1818 and Birmingham and the industrial revolution could easily have swept it away. But in 1857 a committee was formed to raise funds "to save Aston Hall" as a museum and place of public recreation. And, although Birmingham Corporation did not immediately clear the debt, Aston Hall and park were opened to the public in 1858 by Queen Victoria, Birmingham becoming the first municipality in Britain to acquire an historic building to ensure its preservation.

Good on Birmingham — except that more could be done today to preserve the fragile beauty of this urban oasis. In the 1960s the motorway was allowed to cut across the corner of the surviving park, narrowly missing the glorious late medieval parish church of Aston. But the main threat to civilization now — here as elsewhere — is football.

Just north of Aston Park is, alas, the wretched stadium of Aston Villa football club. Every Saturday when there is a home match, the public park is covered in beer cans and graffiti while the local population is subjected to racial abuse. As with other football clubs, Aston Villa now has ambitions and wishes to bring its stadium up to world cup standards by expanding southwards across Trinity Road and seizing part of Aston Park. To its shame, Birmingham city council has granted outline planning permission for this vandalism even though it owns Aston Hall and park for the benefit of *all* Brummies, not just Aston Villa fans. Why?

It is often pointed out that many, many more people in Britain visit museums and art galleries than attend football matches. Yet local authorities and national governments — of whatever hue — feel obliged to take seriously and accommodate the dubious priorities of this loathsome sport. Could it be — as with the threat to Leazes Park from Newcastle United (*Eyes passim*) – that it is not so much posturing before proletarian culture but respect for money? Football is big business and Aston Villa is owned by the multi-millionaire Doug Ellis.

If the Aston Villa stadium is too small, the club should move elsewhere — the conclusion Arsenal seems to have come to after its proposals to overshadow the local north London population with a monstrous new stand provoked opposition. As for Birmingham, it should be ashamed of itself for not protecting something so special as Aston Hall. And not for the first time: after the then corporation tried to pay off its debt by letting Aston Park for public entertainments, a female tight-rope walker was killed there in 1863.

Queen Victoria — who had assumed when she opened the place that Birmingham would have no difficulty finding the money to complete the purchase — expressed outrage that one of her female subjects "should have been sacrificed to the gratification of the demoralising taste". What might she now say about football?

I DISCOVER from the latest Building Design that there is such a thing as The Society of Expert Witnesses and it is about to hold a conference in Manchester.

An "expert witness" is someone who, for a fat fee, is prepared to rubbish an historic building at a public inquiry. Since the departure of the late Sir Hugh Casson, the doyen of these is our old friend Anthony Blee [Eyes passim ad nauseam], whose portrait heads the article and who is quoted as comparing giving evidence to "Premiership football".

He would. Twee Blee's last appearance in Manchester was to endorse a dreadful scheme to build an hotel tower on top of the Free Trade Hall — which was thrown out by the inspector (Eye 945). In fact, knowing Blee has been hired by a developer is always cheering news to any conservationist or amenity society fighting for a fine building: his record is so dismal. Once upon a time Blee inherited the practice of Sir Basil Spence. It is said (unfairly?) that those who can't, teach. Perhaps architects who can't become expert witnesses.

PERHAPS we may be permitted a little pat on the back. In 1996 I wrote about the threat to the cottages in King and Queen Streets in Irlams o' th' Height, Salford (*Eye* 900). Shortly afterwards, following a public inquiry, Salford council agreed compulsorily to purchase these cottages, in a conservation area, from Agecroft Investments. Now, after a nine-year campaign, the Claremont Community Association says it has just celebrated the restoration of The Height Cottages by local builders. Good.

'Piloti'

ITV

Tonight With Trevor McDonald (ITV)

Champions League Football (ITV)

ALTHOUGH it's thought bad form to mention it in showbiz, the consumption of art has its own equivalent of necrophilia. There are theatre-goers who deliberately book for shows which have been rubbished by the critics. They get off on the bruised and frightened eyes of the performers as they orate to empty stalls.

For telly viewers too, there's an undeniable thrill in tuning in to a beleaguered series. Barry Norman's brief stint fronting *Omnibus* and Desmond Wilcox's spell as host of the Nationwide-replacement *Sixty Minutes* were perfect for this purpose. You could see the fear; smell the desperate rows behind the scenes over content.

Now there's **Tonight With Trevor McDonald** (ITV). The flagship occupant of the old *News At Ten* slot, it suffers low ratings and critical derision. In an interview in the current *Radio Times*, reporter Michael Nicholson confides that Sir Trevor is badly twitchy about the whole thing. He certainly looks it. Last week, he seemed glazed and stumbly as he introduced the show. You can almost see him thinking: this isn't working.

There are two insuperable problems with the show, both caused by an old ITV mistake of trying to transplant American ideas. These human-interest news magazine shows are routine in the US, but America has vastly more humans and therefore vastly more human interest stories. Also, crucially, American TV has almost no single documentaries so the magazine shows are the only outlet for softer factual material. With ITV having so many documentary strands, it's never clear why any given story – say, bank charges or NHS waiting lists from last week – is in Trev's slot rather than any other.

The other false borrowing of an American template involves (as Square Eyes pointed out at the beginning) the assumption that anchors are more important than formats. That's true in the States – a presidential and celebrity-obsessed culture – but it's never proved the case in Britain. The fact that the host floundering with a duff show is Sir Trev brings no ratings relief at all.

Doubts about presenter power are also raised by **Live Champions League Football** (ITV), now introduced by the expensively-signed Des Lynam. Although the purchase of Des is good publicity for ITV and bad publicity for the BBC, it's time a sense of perspective was introduced about his allure. Politicians must be astonished when they read the bright-side writing up of Des's achievements. A tiny rise in the ITV average football audience for a match which featured after all the recent winners of the treble was slavishly presented in the papers as a personal triumph for Lynam.

Equally, comedians must wish that television critics were as awed by their gags as they routinely seem to be by Des's attempts. His opening gambit – "I had a feeling we'd be meeting again" was widely compared with the work of Lynam's fellow Irishman Oscar Wilde, although, on even cursory inspection, it's a strangely vainglorious line which suggests a belief that viewers would follow him over from BBC1.

His other highly-praised line – "it takes 13 matches to win [the Champions League] and you can't phone a friend" – was seen by many hacks as eclipsing the collected screenplays of Woody Allen but, again, can be seen as a bit icky. A man who spent 30 years at the BBC – and was even the face on its most recent viewer information brochure – had changed sides so effortlessly that his first gag consisted of a plug for another ITV programme. It was a mercenary's witticism.

The truth, as the new Wilde privately acknowledges, is that the BBC's problem is not that it now has no Lynam but that it has no live football anymore. If it had, Lynam would never have defected. In the past, when BBC and ITV showed the same matches simultaneously, viewers tuned in greater numbers to the BBC. But this was true through the presenting careers of Coleman, Bough, Lynam and even Tony Gubba. Because big matches are now sold to the highest single bidder, Des's appeal is unlikely to be tested head-to-head, but most telly observers will be highly surprised if ITV's football figures in the long-term are up on when the shows were hosted by Bob Wilson. Both the *Tonight With Trevor McDonald* and Des episodes suggest that ITV is repeating what has been its biggest weakness in recent years: an over-reliance on the power of the presenter. With the exception of the reliable Cilla Black, almost all stars signed to ITV on fat contracts – Anthea Turner, Michael Barrymore, Phillip Schofield, Michael Aspel – are now rarely seen on screen. There are strong rumours that a cheque-book is being waved even now at Noel Edmonds. Do they never learn? Viewers don't watch the news because of Trev or the footie because of Des. It's programmes that matter.

'Square Eyes'

BIRT'S PEERAGE

Lord Birt of Downmarket, Nunviewing and Rippoff. For services to ITV and Sky.

LIBEL NEWS

THERE has been a thrilling development in the apparently never-ending litigation over Channel 4's 1991 documentary, *The Committee*, which purported to expose a secret society organising assassinations in Northern Ireland.

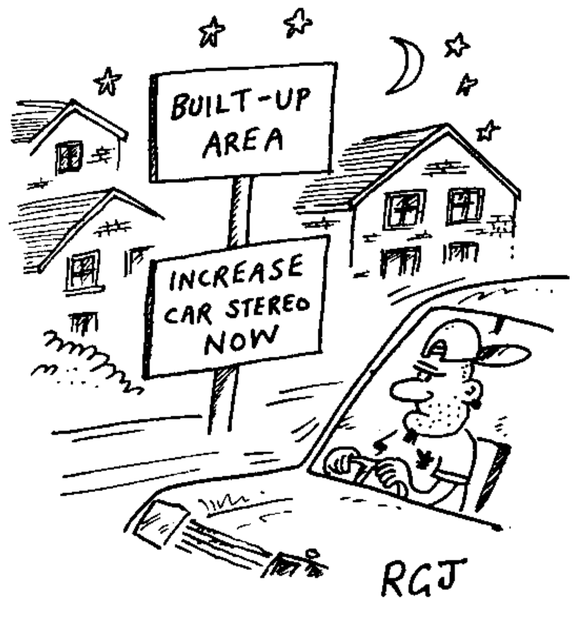
Connoisseurs of the glamrock era will be delighted to learn that the legendary Andrew "Brillo Pad" Neill has now been confirmed as the star turn at the high court next January, in a libel suit brought against the *Sunset Times* by Sean McPhilemy, the programme's producer (see *Eyes passim*). The case has taken so long to come to court that Neill is the defendant, rather than his successor John Whoeverheis.

Neill has the honour of being the first defendant actually to proceed to a full hearing in this multi-million pound event organised by m'learned friends in conjunction with numerous hacks, politicians and policemen. But he's unlikely to be the last, thanks to mounting pile of writs against McPhilemy's subsequent book about "the committee". David Trimble and former RUC assistant chief constable Trevor Forbes are already taking action, and now two more potential litigants have emerged in the form of Liam Clarke, Belfast correspondent for the *Sunday Times*, and Barrington "Barrie" Penrose of the *Sunday Express*.

McPhilemy's American publisher, Roberts-Rhinehart, has written to the lawyers acting for Clarke and Forbes, claiming that "you are labouring under the false impression that the book has been published in the United Kingdom. We are aware of no such publication". But since the book has been sold – and heavily promoted – on the Amazon.co.uk website, a test case on whether British courts can claim jurisdiction over what's sold on the internet inevitably looms.

By unhappy coincidence, amazon.co.uk has been running an expensive advertising campaign stressing how very British it is. It also claims to exercise "some editorial control" over what appears on its site. This may yet prove a rather expensive boast.

Historical note for younger readers: A decade ago, Andrew "Brillo Pad" Neill was one of the most famous men in the world, noted for his exotic hairstyle and interesting girlfriends (or, depending on the weather, vice versa). But in recent years he has disappeared into obscurity, advising Mohamed Fayed and the sinister Barclay twins. His appearance in the McPhilemy case may well turn out to be a farewell gig, and courtroom seats are likely to be in heavy demand.



MEDIA NEWS

GRANADA TV has devised a novel approach to hard-hitting investigative journalism: it is teaching its victims to fight back.

Yes, if you're a business executive receiving some unwelcome attention from aggressive Granada hacks, fear not. Simply enrol on one of the day-long courses run by Granada presenter/reporter Hazel Barrett and Granada producer Brian Morris, where assembled suits learn how to avoid being trapped by awkward questions.

Morris can next be seen in action on 28 October when he addresses a "PR forum" organised by the CBI and sponsored by Manweb. The title of his lecture? "You don't have to answer the question."

Perhaps Granada will soon go the whole hog and bring back *World in Action* to see how well its fat-cat pupils use their new skills.

"IT is very important that you cover our suffering and do what we cannot do." So said East Timorese leader Xanana Gusmao, taking time to praise BBC World on what was, well, a difficult day for his country.

On the very same day the BBC announced that the channel's future was to be "secured" with the loss of 50 jobs and a dramatic reduction in the kind of output Gusmao and fellow viewers in 200 other countries might actually sit down to watch.

Thus the channel that was set up to rival CNN is to lose the guts of its analytical output, the very programming that made it an alternative to CNN's thought-free zone. After all the guff about maintaining the quality of the BBC "brand", World will be reborn in April as a shameless CNN copy.

It will offer mainly "business orientated news": pap for travelling executives bored with the porn channels in their hotel; its 30-minute news schedules designed by market researchers who are backed by the advertisers the channel is so keen to attract. After all, what's the sense in broadcasting news to the likes of the East Timorese until they're in a position to take advantage of the excellent range of products peddled in the commercial breaks?

According to the latest annual report, BBC World was starting to increase its distribution: up by 20 percent year-on-year, with 45 percent of US homes now capable of tuning in. But the wait for profitability proved too long for the governors of what is supposed to be a "public service" broadcaster. Meanwhile the unwatched News 24 continues to bring in no revenue at huge cost to licence-payers.

CHRISTIAN AID's campaign to persuade the western economies to cancel third world debt for the year 2000 continues.

The charity's latest effort has been direct contact with a number of big names in the political and ecumenical scenes, as this address label from a mailshot received recently in our office shows:

```
The Reverend Blair
                                    9951C0012
The Reverend Blair
C/O St Albion Parish  News
Private Eye
6 Carlisle Street
LONDON
W1V 5RG
                                        349976
```

WHEN Rupert Murdoch was awarded the Humanitarian of the Year award by an obscure American body two years ago, this well-deserved tribute received copious coverage in his newspapers.

Strangely there has been no mention of his latest triumph: being "dishonored" by right-wing media lobbying group Empower America.

Even before Murdoch's 20th Century Fox releases Brad Pitt's sick new film *Fight Club*, Rupert has scored a double, picking up two awards. He wins the third annual Silver Sewer Award for his "outrageous contribution to the degradation and coarsening of our culture and unswerving dedication to the pursuit of profit above principle." And he also picks up a "Lifetime Achievement Award" for his "personal role in the corrosion of American values".

WHEN the mother of murdered toddler Jamie Bulger turned up at the European court of human rights in Strasbourg to put her case against the early release of the boys convicted of murdering her son, many people wondered: where was the father?

Denise Bulger's ex-husband, Ralph, had wanted to make the trip but could not afford it. But his solicitor, Robin Makin, went to Strasbourg at his own expense and charged no fee.

Denise Bulger was able to go with her friend Leslie and solicitor Sean Sexton because the bill for their trip – business class, all expenses paid – was picked up by ITN and arranged by her press agent Chris Johnson of Mercury Press.

As it turned out, Denise was only able to give a terse three-sentence statement before the cameras in Strasbourg. On the way home, in the hospitality bar in Brussels airport, one of the lawyers acting for one of the killers, Robert Thompson – who had been a long time waiting for the connecting flight – offered Denise a drink in order to "let bygones be bygones". Her understandable response was not selected by ITN for broadcast.

Plugged In

Saturday was a day when the sport-loving couch potato had the advantage over the person with the match tickets — always provided he or she had access to Sky Sports that is... something has to move or Sky would need about ten sports channels to display the full range of cherries they have picked from the table of available sporting goodies.

NICK SCZCEPANIK
The Times

An occasional column devoted to cross-media plugs masquerading as news.

OPERA NEWS

THE Australian soprano Yvonne Kenny, currently enjoying considerable success as the Marschallin in the uncontroversial production of *Der Rosenkavalier* playing at ENO, has had her fair share of modernism in the past.

In one foreign clime she sang Fiordiligi in *Cosi fan Tutte* in a production that explored every nuance of Mozart's and da Ponte's masterpiece. Unusually (or perhaps not) the director had the bright idea of setting the soprano's sublime Act II aria, *Per Pieta*, in which Fiordiligi wrestles with her inner conflict, with the singer exercising in a rowing machine.

Ms Kenny, ever the professional, went along with this director's whim and all was well until the production was revived at a later date. By then curiosity had got the better of her and after a few bars of singing accompanied by steady heaving to-and-fro she stopped a stage rehearsal and addressed the director, sitting at the back of the stalls:

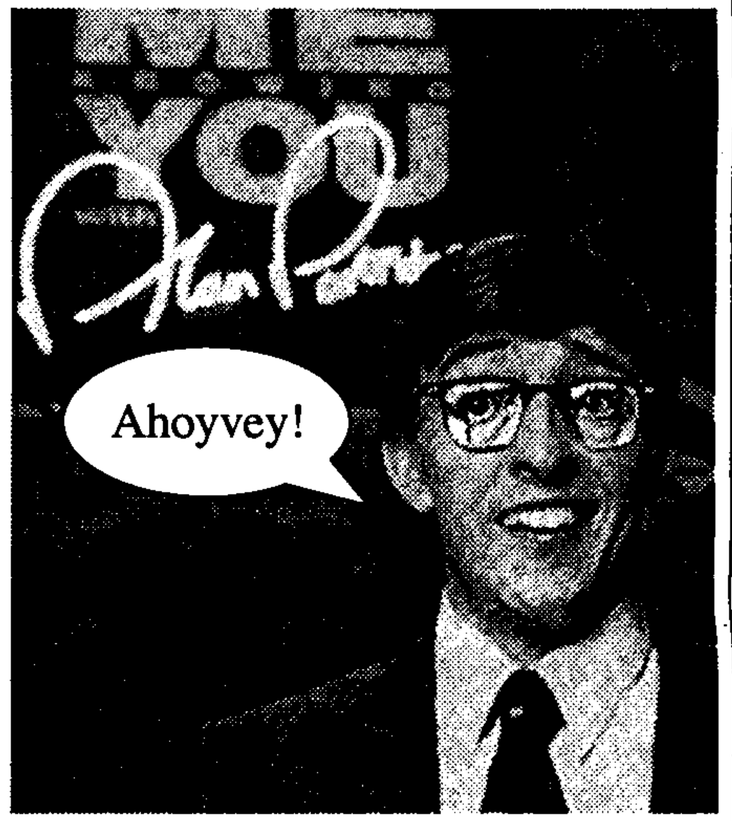
"I'm sorry, but can you actually tell me why I'm singing this aria in a rowing machine?"

"Because if you don't, there are a hundred Fiordiligis who will," came the ominous reply.

When asked what happened next, the great soprano replies "I rowed like fuck!"

SPLIT personalities

Bob Moore



Woody Allen Partridge

JAZZ... NICE

GAFFE-prone Russell Davies has done it again. The bearded part-time trad trombonist and presenter of Radio Three's Jazz Century, not content with playing records at the wrong speed (*Eye* 969), now has problems distinguishing the trumpet from the saxophone.

In programme 33 of the series *The Birth of the Cool*, Davies announced a record by the Gerry Mulligan Quartet, asking listeners to pay particular attention to Mulligan's interplay with Chet Baker on trumpet. He then played the Gerry Mulligan Quartet but with Paul Desmond on, er... alto sax.

A CAR was abandoned and left to starve inside a house in Nottingham, despite being pregnant.

Nottingham Recorder

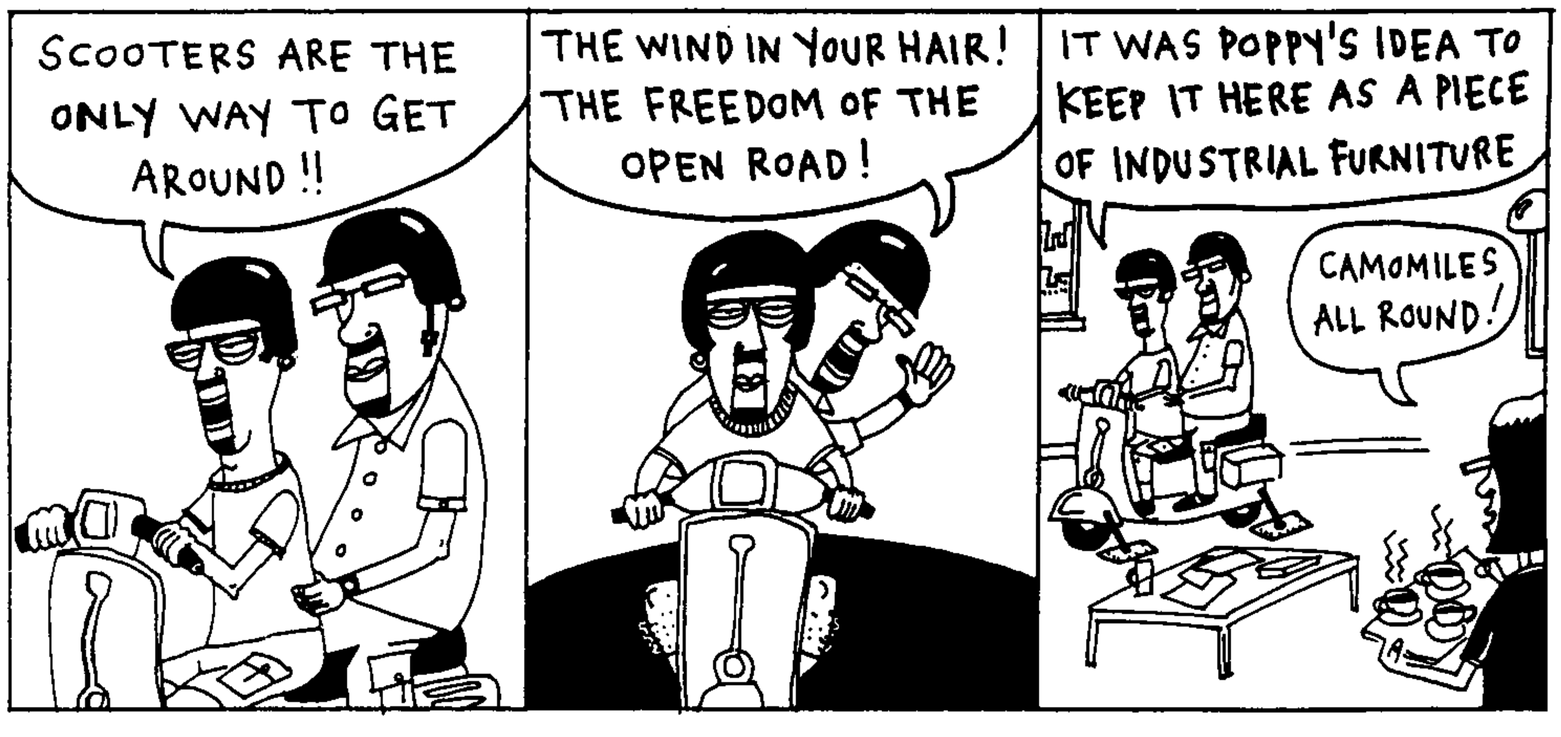
JUST FANCY THAT!

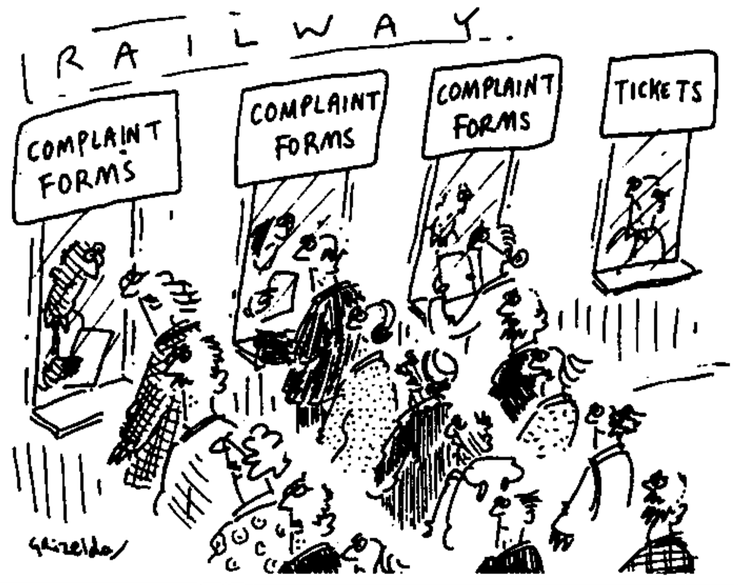
LIKE Smashy and Nicey, Mohamed Fayed does a lot of work for charidee – but doesn't like to talk about.

This at least is the likeliest explanation for the following entry in the "grantseeker" files of the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF): "**The Al-Fayed Charitable Foundation.** This trust failed to meet CAF's researchers and failed to supply a copy of its annual report and accounts to CAF as required under section 47(2) of the Charities Act 1963. The information held on file at the Charity Commission was insufficient to enable CAF's researchers to write a substantive commentary on the trust's activities."

IT'S GRIM UP NORTH LONDON

KNIFE & PACKER


SCOOTERS ARE THE ONLY WAY TO GET AROUND!!
THE WIND IN YOUR HAIR! THE FREEDOM OF THE OPEN ROAD!
IT WAS POPPY'S IDEA TO KEEP IT HERE AS A PIECE OF INDUSTRIAL FURNITURE
CAMOMILES ALL ROUND!



SIGNAL FAILURES

Jubilee line extortion

TUBE passengers really should rejoice: London Underground finally has a station built to late 20th-century standards.

It sits in a gigantic subterranean box, not the usual cramped tunnel bores; it has three platforms, automatic doors along the platform edges, easy interchange with buses, plenty of escalators – which actually move – and an impressive, spacious concourse.

But tube passengers aren't rejoicing, for hardly any of them have witnessed this miracle. That is because it is not in the West End or City, or at one of the mainline rail terminii, but way out east on a spit of semi-derelict land in North Greenwich. The magnificent station gives direct access to loads of places though – well, to the millennium dome anyway and, er, that's it.

North Greenwich station is the largest on the fabulously expensive Jubilee line extension (JLE), the biggest addition to the tube system for decades. The proximity of that other great folly of our age, the dome, gives tourists the chance to see three examples of English eccentricity in one place.

The JLE will, like any tube investment, make some worthwhile contribution to travel in London, especially along its western section through Bermondsey, London Bridge and Southwark. But that section accounts for only half the 10-mile extension.

The remainder, including three crossings under the Thames, was supposedly built to regenerate the Stratford area. It will allow people from Stratford to travel to West Ham and Canning Town (which they could already on Silverlink trains), to central London (which they could by Central line), Canary Wharf (which they could on the Docklands Light Railway) or North Greenwich (which they won't need or want to, especially once the dome is shut).

Somehow the Tories, still obsessed with their docklands dream, decided this was the project that deserved once-in-a-generation funding. The east-west Crossrail tunnel to take mainline trains from Essex to Berkshire via central London was shelved; the Chelsea to Hackney tube line (serving Clapham Junction and Battersea) remains a pipedream; and Thameslink trains are bursting at the seams because the Thameslink 2000 project (*Eye* 972) was not started before it came under Railtrack's dead hand.

The JLE has also soaked up money which should have been used to keep the core tube network in better shape. The JLE's final cost is likely to approach £3.5bn, compared with an original budget of £1.9bn in 1993. In 1995 the work needed to create a "decently modern metro" system for London was costed at £1bn above London Transport's investment funding at the time; an additional £200m for five consecutive years would have resulted in the underground's need for subsidy declining sharply because the modernised system would have had lower running costs and higher income.

That £1bn was withheld by the Tories and the spiralling cost of the JLE has forced London Transport to abandon or postpone scores of projects, like new lifts and escalators at some of the busiest stations. Resignalling the Metropolitan line has been put back indefinitely, and the Victoria line upgrade, bringing more frequent services, deferred to 2000 or later.

Thus much of the tube system enters the new millennium in a shabby state with little prospect of radical improvement because the Labour government is bringing in Railtrack and other private companies to do the elementary work that should have been done long ago. But who cares so long as the public can at least travel to the millennium dome and Canary Wharf in comfort?

'Dr B. Ching'

DOING THE ROUNDS

Ambulance update

THE Eye's exposure of the lack of regulation of private ambulance operators following the death of Kathryn Jones (Eye 984) has attracted a large response from emergency services employees in the NHS and the private sector.

The British Ambulance Association (BAA) has campaigned for more than three years for compulsory standards of training and monitoring to reward reputable private operators and weed out cowboys.

Despite lobbying the prime minister and secretaries of state for transport and health, the BAA's pleadings have fallen on deaf ears. At present anyone can paint a few stripes on a second hand vehicle, buy a uniform, stick a blue light on top and advertise in the yellow pages as a provider of emergency medical services. There is no legal requirement for any training whatever and nothing to prevent such outfits rushing to emergencies.

A common ploy is to turn up at amateur sporting events such as gymkhanas and rally cross in the hope of picking up business. Emergency management at these events can be complex, often more so than head injuries after boxing, because there is no record of the medical history of the participants. As one ambulance operator put it: "At least with boxing you can be sure the patient doesn't have diabetes or epilepsy or whatever."

Aside from the obvious dangers of lack of medical expertise and the ability to drive safely at high speed, there is also no check on the background of such ambulance operators. There have been rare but well documented cases of a paedophile ring posing as a private ambulance service at children's sports events, and one operator in the Swansea area has 34 criminal charges to his name.

There are many more reputable private ambulance operators, and the NHS would fall to pieces without their help; but it has been left to small organisations like the BAA to register those whom it believes are providing a good service. Of 105 applicants just 67 have been registered. But there is nothing to stop the other 38 from operating.

With no statutory control over private ambulances the patient and his/her medical adviser (if present) have to make a split second decision on the competence of an ambulance service based on no information. But what if the purchaser of the emergency service is an NHS trust?

Kathryn Jones's uncle was told by Joe Magee, a senior policy officer at the department of health, that private ambulances are not permitted to use blue light and siren for NHS work, and that "no NHS trust would have a contract whereby private ambulances were employed to undertake emergency duties".

"Mr Magee is clearly mistaken," says Hugh Ross, chief executive of the United Bristol Healthcare Trust. Mr Ross should know. His trust has had a contract since February 1998 with the private ambulance firm Wings to do the bulk of its "emergency retrieval service" — taking specialist staff to other hospitals to stabilise and transport very sick children back to the paediatric intensive care unit at Bristol Children's Hospital. It was a Wing's vehicle travelling to such an emergency that collided with Kathryn Jones.

All emergency vehicles are potentially lethal and NHS ambulances kill more road users every year than private operators because there are far more of them. But the Jones family's grief over what may have been a genuine accident has not been helped by their discovery of the lack of regulation in the private service in general, and the fact that the Wing's driver did not have any training for driving at speed to emergencies.

The health department's most recent response to the call for regulation was depressing. In response to a letter to Frank Dobson, Joe Magee replied (on 2 September): "The responsibility for ensuring good quality care from private ambulance services rest with those who contract with them. In 1993, the Department issued a Voluntary Code of Practice for Private Ambulance Services. It was sent to all those in the NHS with responsibility for purchase or provision of non-emergency services, and we believe this provides a powerful incentive for the private sector to operate at a high standard and if they do not, they will not be able to contract with the NHS."

So the DoH pours public money into the NHS, takes no responsibility for the quality of care and passes the buck back to the *purchasers* of the service who lack the time and expertise to make a judgement as to whether the service is safe. We have a voluntary code for non-emergencies, no code or legislation for emergencies and a DoH senior policy officer who isn't aware that private ambulances are doing emergency work for the NHS. 'Nuff said.

M.D.

DOWN ON THE FARM

AID packages may come and go, and the crumbs thrown to farming are welcome enough, but the really exciting news is that agriculture minister Nick "Newcastle" Brown is going to tackle red tape, the bane of the farmer's life and a permanent fixture on the NFU's wish list.

Never mind agricultural crisis and insolvency: farmers who have cheerfully faced these in the past are packing up now because the burden of bureaucracy means the job is no longer fun.

So three cheers! But what will Brown actually be able to achieve? Larger type on the IACS forms, perhaps? Clearer instructions on Intervention Board Milk Quota forms? An extension of the time allowed to apply for Cattle Passports?

Totalitarian regimes run by central bureaucracies are prone to red tape; and if Brown hopes to reduce farm paperwork by holding a review, he has sadly misunderstood EU farming. But while his underlings scurry around trying to come up with a convincing package, perhaps he might ponder the real puzzle: how can national standards be applied in a world of international free trade?

Neil Datson, Oxfordshire farmer and writer, has recently described how the UK pig industry is being destroyed. UK governments have loaded producers with costs not shared by other countries while refusing to discriminate in favour of the end product. So as Datson says: "A rather strange circumstance has arisen: the government insists on its right to use [imported] pork and bacon in – for example – its hospital catering, whose production methods it has declared not only cruel but inherently unsafe. So unsafe as to be illegal."

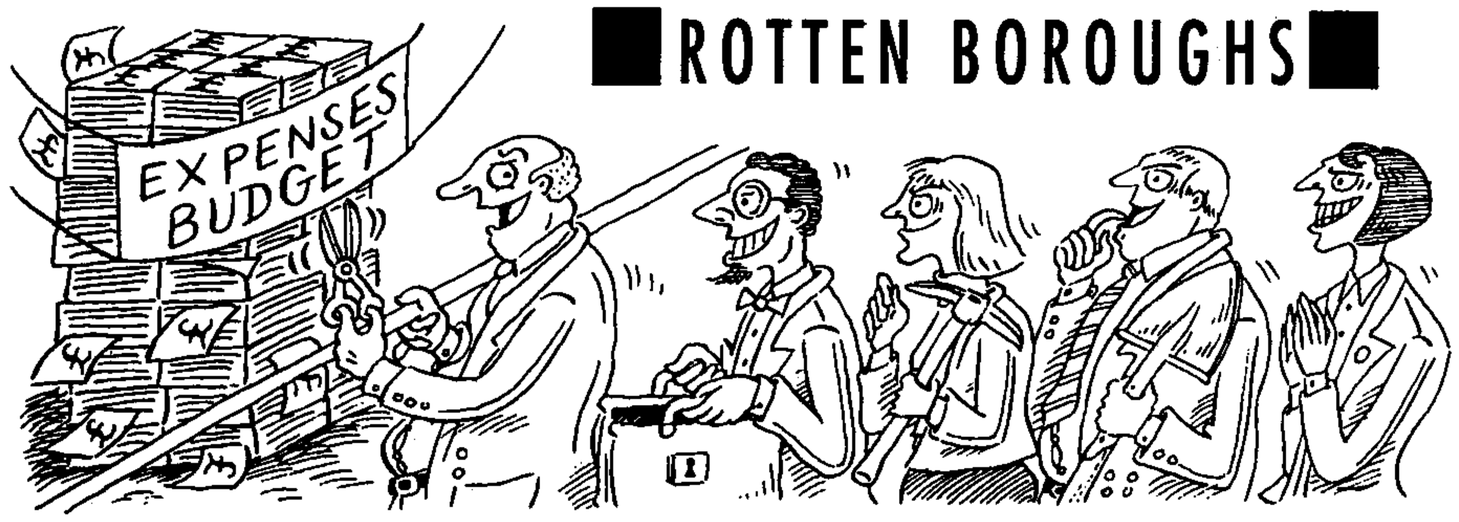
This absurd position covers not only pigs but every sector – and not only in trade between us and the EU but between the EU and the rest of the world. Even the NFU has finally begun to realise that howling every time new legislation is proposed is not working; both it and European farm unions have begun to ask for protection instead and are calling for non-trade issues such as animal welfare and the environment to be included in forthcoming World Trade Organisation (WTO) talks.

European ministers have always tried to stave off WTO pressure, but now a UK minister is on record saying that uniform standards would be demanded at the WTO talks. "You cannot compromise on welfare," said Scottish farm minister Ross Finnie, without irony. But that won't work either: the Americans have no intention of agreement. "Non-trade objectives should not be used as a smokescreen for protectionist policies," says their official communique. The US wants global agriculture to be run to the lowest common denominator.

So that's it then: the end of the World Trade Organisation. Three cheers again! Could it possibly mean the end of the CAP too? Well, at least that would clean up a lot of red tape.

'Gumboot'

ROTTEN BOROUGHS



BOURNEMOUTH HO!

Lest delegates to the Labour party conference on the south coast feel homesick, Private Eye *offers this reminder of what is happening back home in the Labour heartlands...*

LANCS A LOT

RUMBLINGS of rum goings-on from the Labour party in Lancashire, where the behaviour of a clique of councillors surrounding Frank McKenna, deputy leader of the county council, has many party members deeply worried.

Serious allegations have evidently reached ears at a very high level in the party, for in mid-September West Lancashire MP Colin Pickthall, parliamentary private secretary to Jack Straw, sacked the ambitious McKenna as his parliamentary assistant. McKenna has since denied having tried to stab his boss in the back by beginning a campaign to replace him as Labour candidate.

It has not been a good month for McKenna, who also sits on West Lancashire district council and was described in a recent magazine profile as a "rising star" bound for "greater things". His ambitions took another blow when he failed to be selected as Labour candidate for last week's Wigan by-election.

Of more pressing concern is the state of West Lancashire constituency Labour party's accounts, which contain discrepancies dating back several years and only now coming to light. One concerns the mysterious case of the non-existent computer. The accounts for November 1996 note expenditure of £752 on computer equipment and a corresponding cheque stub is made out to Lancashire county councillor Chris Cheetham.

This was news to Cheetham when he found out about it last week, as he has not purchased a computer on behalf of the Labour party and has never received a cheque for £752 from party funds. As he chairs Lancashire's finance committee, with a budget of almost £1bn a year, his financial good name is very important to him. He is understandably keen to find out to whom the cheque was actually made out. If Labour cannot clear up the matter he is confident Inspector Knacker can. No doubt Knacker will start by asking county councillor John Fillis, the local party's treasurer in 1996, currently Labour whip at county hall and a close associate of Frank McKenna.

NO NAMES

A PURGE is under way among Labour party members in Doncaster. Top of the list for expulsion are not Donny's corrupt councillors (see *Eyes passim*), but a woman whose only crime was to try to shed light on the murky corners of this most rotten borough.

In 1997 a draft report by the district auditor named 42 councillors and officers as allegedly having accepted inappropriate gifts and hospitality from business interests seeking council contracts. But the names were never published. It would be improper to do so, said Doncaster's Labour leader Malcolm Glover. A "Name the Names" campaign was started, supported by the local press. But Glover stood his ground. No name was named. The regional Labour party backed him, not even demanding private sight of the draft report. Tony Blair declared his confidence in Glover and the new regime. Potential candidates were interviewed through Millbank's "Project 99" scheme to clean up local government. A pamphlet, *Agenda for Change* declaring that everything in the garden was rosy, signed by Glover and chief executive Alf Taylor, was sent to every household.

Then the roof fell in. The reelected Glover was arrested on 10 charges of fiddling his expenses. Five other candidates who passed Labour's suitability test were also arrested. Three have subsequently been tried and found guilty. Taylor was arrested for publishing the *Agenda for Change* leaflet. William Hague taunted Blair that "the man he put in charge of cleaning up Doncaster has himself been arrested".

At last the long-overdue purge of compromised party members has already started but, er, it is Joan Moffat, life-long activist and spokesperson for the entirely vindicated "Name the Names" campaign, who has been asked to explain her conduct by the Doncaster central Labour party, with a view to recommending her expulsion. She has been invited to respond to an allegation that she acted as a "fifth columnist" when she inquired into Malcolm Glover's election expenses. The complainant is, er, Malcolm Glover. No, seriously!

HO HO HOVE

NOTWITHSTANDING Brighton & Hove "executive councillor" Ian Duncan's insistence (see Letters) that everything is tickety-boo regarding the sale of an unspecified long lease on the seafront King Alfred sports centre, questions are still being asked about the way the deal was handled by the Labour council, until recently headed by former squatters' leader Lord "Steve" Bassam.

Developers want to build a monstrous cinema complex, leisure centre and car park on the seafront (see *Eye* 984). But the district auditor is now under pressure from residents to ask why the council made no apparent effort to discover the real value of the site with planning permission, why it was not advertised and competing bids invited, and why the price being paid by developer Citygrove Leisure plc is being kept secret.

The council's spokesman tells the *Eye* on the one hand that the tie-up with Citygrove was "inherited" from the former Hove council, and on the other that "no deal has been done yet – we're still negotiating". He adds: "We will insist on getting any deal signed off by the district auditor to demonstrate it has been handled properly."

CHIPPY CHAPPIE

EMBARRASSING times for Labour peer Lord Nazir Ahmed in his home town of Rotherham, South Yorkshire, where he is still a councillor. And it's all down to a fish and chip shop.

When in 1997 the council advertised the lease on a shop it owned, Lord Naz's brother Mohammed Tariq entered a bid to run a fish and chip shop on the premises. By February 1998 there were only two contenders left in the secret tendering process — Tariq and John Gilding, who has since become a Conservative councillor. Tariq's original bid was for £3,000, but within a week of Mr Gilding entering a bid for £5,000 Tariq upped his to £5,100.

Council officers who said this was "odd" at the time were ignored. Evidence to an investigation by the local government ombudsman reveals that Cllr Nazir Ahmed was named as having an interest in the shop in a memorandum dated 22 April 1997. But Lord Naz has denied any part in the deal and threatened legal action against anyone who implies he had access to inside information.

SPOT the difference. When Leeds city council chief exec Phil Smith retired in the summer, the Labour council's chief legal officer Paul Rogerson took over his job without it being advertised. When the manager of the council-run Mandela youth and community centre in the inner city Chapeltown area engaged a temporary worker for a week without the post being advertised, she was summarily dismissed. Paul Rogerson is a white man earning more than £100,000 a year. Jocelyn Bass, who managed the Mandela Centre, is a black woman who earned around a fifth of the chief executive's salary.

Pseuds Corner

"To spend a couple of hours with Manolo Blahnik is to be sucked into a tornado of high-speed chat, ratatat-tat humour, a thrilling, bewildering, multi-coloured swirl of historical reference and fabulous over-statement. In his company, you leave the ground mere mortals tread on and are swept up, up, up into the force-field of glamour he whirls around himself. This is a pretty privileged place to be: Manolo Blahnik, after all, is fashion royalty, a vastly lauded designer of international standing and so successful that his name shows every sign of passing into the language as a generic term: Manolos – n. the sexiest, most luxurious women's footwear imaginable. And here he is, in London, living with us."

SARAH MOWER
ES Magazine

"[Sarah Kane's] three plays after Blasted, although never quite so luridly violent, were still shot through with the banality of cruelty, although critics detected a

new humanity and even lyricism in Crave and Cleansed. Even amid the eye-gouging, castration and dismemberment of the latter play, there were moments of beauty and even black humour provided by a choir of singing rats."

FIACHRA GIBBONS
Guardian

1080 Rave
Music by Ryeland Allison
Copyright © 1994, Ryeland Allison
Ryeland arranges simultaneous manifold particle vibrations to proclaim "Resonance". Resonance *is* to some extent qualified to contented apportion within disassociative continuance, proceding *(sic)* space. When converged in a synchronous locus, he at once regenerates toward fluidic empathy. He is honored to introduce this to you.

Manual for Roland JV1080 Synthesizer

This is the latest creation from the Rust en Vrede Estate in Stellenbosch. Just as the Lion represents the splendour and power of the noonday sun, it also embodies a sense of protection; a sense of being a guardian, a sense of being uncomplicated and content. These wines from Rust & Vrede bring back the art of unpretentious dining.

Promotional literature from New World Wine Distributors

Leaves bud
grow – go brown
and fall to the ground.
The sea – a deep blue keeps turning
the stars shine – the sun rolls and
the earth moves around it –
And sperm doesn't stop
it just goes on for ever –
like pollen blowing in the wind
Rolling in time
The whole idea is so fucking
exciting

TRACEY EMIN
Independent on Sunday

CONTRIBUTORS: Lorna Stroup, Michael Grosvenor Myer, D.W. Anthony, Graham Roberts, Michael Carlson.

£10 paid for entries

Letters

LETTER OF THE WEEK

(The following letter was received from a democratically elected member of the Labour party. We have not made it up. Sadly.)

Sir,

Re: Memorial for Diana. Now the government has approved a fountain, may I suggest it be in the form of a giant, spurting phallus? That would seem appropriate.

Yours sincerely,
CHRISTOPHER SHORT,

Labour councillor, Castleland Ward, Vale of Glamorgan.

Pain in the Archole

Sir,

So, it's official then. We are getting a fountain in memory of Princess Diana. No sooner is this announced than Jeffrey Archer pops up to suggest we all pay £1 each towards it.

No disrespect to Diana, but my natural inclination towards propositions from this fellow is to do the precise opposite. In other words, you can whistle for it, Jeff.

However, I do have a suggestion for Lord Archer and that is that he sits on the thing before they turn it on. That way he can avail himself of a Princess Di-style colonic irrigation without paying through the nose for it as she did.

Yours aye,
STEPHEN DAVIES,

Croydon, Surrey.

On the wrong track

Sir,

Your correspondent on the Southall rail crash (In the Back, 17 Sept) is in danger of being diverted into a dead end siding.

No tracks on the British railway network are "reserved" for high-speed passenger trains alone and conflicting movements (one train crossing in front of another) take place every day. That is why the railway has signals, just as roads have traffic lights at junctions.

The real question is why did the Great Western train pass through two red signals, which were theoretically protecting the freight train, before the impact? As you state, both the Advanced Warning System and (prototype) Automatic Train Protection system were turned off — in breach of the rulebook.

The Conservative government's failure to fund the full implementation of ATP, despite Cecil Parkinson's promises, might also be a useful subject of debate for the inquiry.

Yours sincerely,
JONATHAN BUISSON,

Hook, Hampshire.

Cock-eyed observation

Sir,

Is it significant that an anagram of Michael Portillo is "Omit phallic role"?

SIMON HANCOCK,

Guernsey.

Tosh lines

Sir,

I have subscribed to Private Eye for nearly 20 years in the faint anticipation that I might be one day mentioned in it. I am pleased to say that this finally came true for the first time in the last edition. I also am extremely pleased that in so doing, your publication stuck to its long-standing principle of printing a load of old tosh. I would have been utterly disappointed if this had not been so and would have asked for a refund. Please note therefore:

BBC Worldwide is not "poor" — it generates over £80m cashflow for the BBC per annum.

It is not "old" — it was formed only in 1994.

In my time at Worldwide, we have not verified any member of staff downloading bestial porn, and therefore the issue of whether we should dismiss or "cover-up" does not exist.

I was disappointed that you got one fact right. We do employ some members of staff who learnt their skills marketing brands of baked beans, and a pretty good job they must have done too — as your writer obviously consumed a lot of them before going off to deliver his "piece".

Yours sincerely,
RUPERT GAVIN,

Chief Executive, BBC Worldwide.

Lookalike

Austin

Andrew

Sir,

Reading an article on Tim Rice, I was very struck by the similarity between Andrew Lloyd Webber as a young man, and Austin Powers. I wonder if your readers would agree.

Yours faithfully,
KAREN ALLAN (Ms),

Dundee.

Kiss my rebuttal

Sir,

Local Spartist sources seem to have let you down in style over your story about Hove's crumbling King Alfred leisure centre.

Our turbo-charged rebuttal machine, still warm from the last time we appeared in your pages, offers the following:

Redevelopment is not "against most locals' wishes" — respondents to a survey sent to 14,000 homes were three to one in favour.

We're not selling the site, we're leasing it.

It's not for "a pittance" — the district auditor will see to that.

Who knows whether the new centre will have a McDonald's — no restaurants have been let yet.

The new sports centre will not be smaller. It would be as big as the old one, the sports hall bigger and the facility more modern, flexible and better equipped.

The poor old King Alfred building may be listing but it's certainly not "listed".

Yes, the developers have given £2,500 to the national rather than local Labour party — hardly the basis for a lockout clause. Does ASDA or Lord McAlpine avoid developing where councils are Tory?

IAN DUNCAN,

Executive Councillor, Arts, recreation and tourism, Brighton & Hove.

Wrong end of the stick?

Sir,

"We Shakespearean scholars" (Sid and Doris Bookworm, Eye 985) may refer to "the sticking point". Shakespeare, however, spoke of "the sticking-place".

Yours faithfully,
EMILY MORRIS (MISS)

London N1.

PS: I failed English literature A Level in '73. And part I of the English Tripos in '76. I am right though...

OH, YEAH?

Edward Norman, dean of Peterhouse for 20 years from 1970 and a mentor of Mr Portillo, sought to play down the college's homosexual scene. "There's nothing particularly gay about Peterhouse," he said. "No more than in the usual sense that if you went to a rugby club supper someone would dress as a woman. The way normal young people behave."

— *Sunday Telegraph*, 12 September

Pocket money

Sir,

The Guardian First Book Award: "here at last" (you say) "is a prize that supports emerging talent, rather than lining the pockets of the already rich and famous". You fail to explain what the prize is. The winner nominates a school which will receive a thousand pounds' worth of books (perhaps eight thousand unsold copies of Peter Preston's "satire" "Bess"). Terrific prize. Not lining the pockets of the already rich and famous. Also not lining the pockets of hard-up emerging talent.

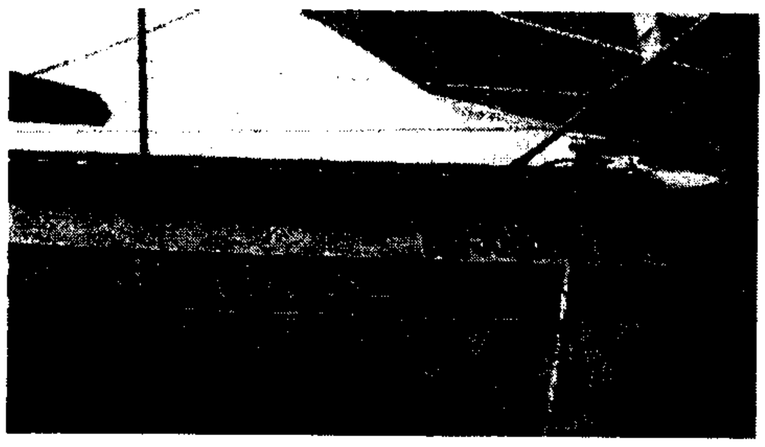
You're amazed that a book by James Hall, praised by Richard Gott, isn't on the shortlist. The Guardian has had various awful art critics. Hall wasn't one of them. He wrote rubbish, badly and pretentiously. All art critics do that. But Hall set a new standard. Upper-class twit Gott was one of the world's most self-regarding literary editors and he's written rubbish of his own about art, obeisant to the bubble-headed fashionable art establishment. An art book written by James Hall and endorsed by Gott is certain to be no good at all. So you're right to be surprised. The dumbed-down Guardian's book prize panel includes the Rubbisher-in-chief, cliche-writing literary editor Claire Armitstead, and Liza Jardine. Hall's book ought to be right up their Farringdon Road.

Yours sincerely,
RICHARD RUSH,

Hastings, E. Sussex.

I-SPY

Lake Balaton, Hungary.



Submitted by Kevin Beckett. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

LUVVIES

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Tonight will be yet another event in the remarkable history of the Old Vic.

We shall be making a film of that rich communion in the trinity of author, actor and audience.

That wholeness of purpose flowing in connection and consent from the stage to the house, from the house to the stage, from the author to the actors, from the actors to the audience, from the audience to the play, from the play to the players, from the players to the playhouse. That co-operation of will and imagination which for its two or so hours' traffic becomes author, actor and audience, our chosen actuality.

We actors will be doing our part. Our author will be doing his. With true happiness we invite you, ladies and gentlemen to do your part. Be our audience.

Ever, PETER O'TOOLE.

Flyer given to Old Vic audience at filmed performance of *Jeffrey Bernard Is Unwell*

Submitted by Thomas Bolton ("a contribution in the spirit of communion between Editor, Reader and Luvvie")

Heading

Sir,

I would like to add my tuppence worth to the small ads debate. I wholly disagree with Dr "Peeved" Peverly in his recent comments about the placers of ads in Eye Love.

We are not all cheap shallow and depressing pervs you know! In fact Sir, my fiance and I met through Eye Love seven years ago when he placed an ad himself. Prior to this I met one or two fellows via the column all of which were perfect gentlemen! Don't tar us with the same brush!

Your comments may have been in jest Sir, but they will have undoubtedly offended some — ourselves included!

We happily are to marry in New York City later this year. VIVA EYE LOVE! May it continue with its many different and colourful characters pervy or otherwise! You can count us as one of your successes!

Yours stroppily,
JOANNA WINTER,

Via e-mail.

The history man

Sir,

So local historians don't get cash from Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) (Eye 985)? Too bad, but then again we have more local historians in the highlands than heather on the hills.

Your swipe at James Hunter and his book "Last of the Free" is wide of the mark. What he has written is much more than a history text — his 400-page book also addresses the cultural, political and economic problems facing the Highlands and Islands. It is an excellent book and stands about as much comparison with a local history work as the Eye does with Punch.

I have no connection with James Hunter, his book or HIE.

Best wishes,
DAVID MacDONALD,

Perth, Scotland.

"This is it? The four-poster bed?"

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"One of our listeners will be walking off with a brand new Toyota."
ALLY BALLY, Radio Tay
(Ian A. Morton)

"The crowd... a cacophony of colour."
PETER DRURY, ITV
(Tony Haycroft)

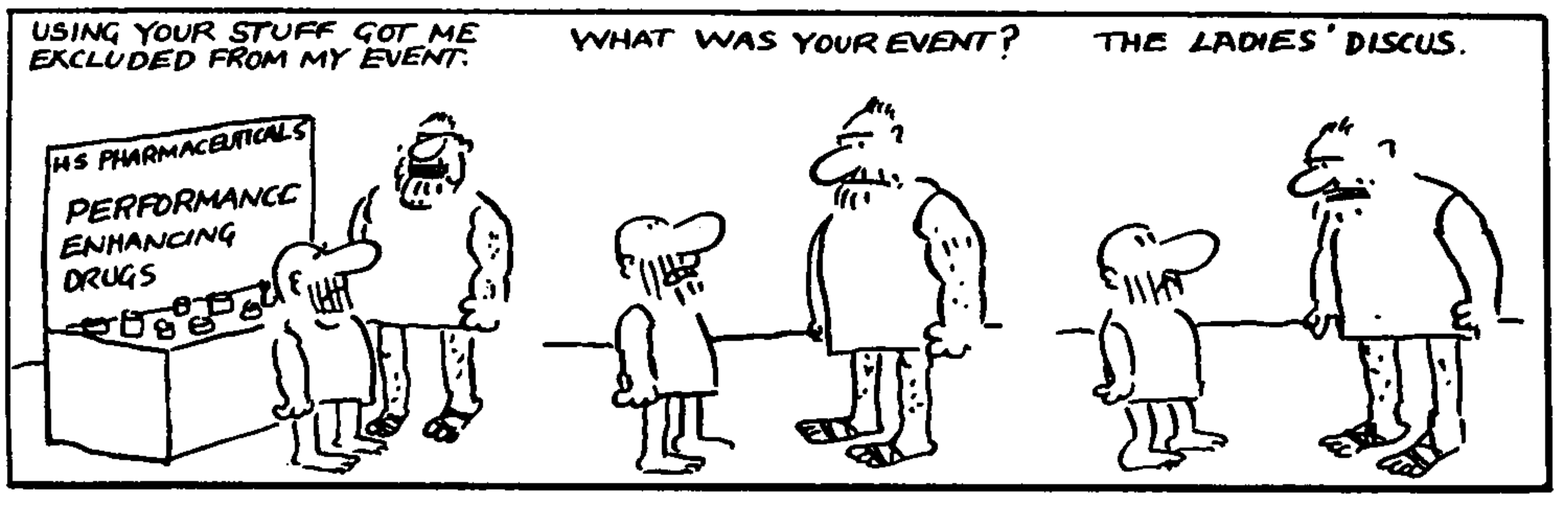
"Survivors of the earthquake in Taiwan are enjoying another night of uncertainty."
BBC World Service
(Dan Howland)

"And going away from here without full points means the candle is still very much in the melting pot."
ALLAN MacANALLY, Radio 5
(Patrick Aspinall)

"The 33 or 34-year-olds will be 36 or 37 by the time the next World Cup comes around, if they're not careful."
KEVIN KEEGAN, Channel 5
(Gordon Tuxworth)

HOM SAP

AUSTIN


USING YOUR STUFF GOT ME EXCLUDED FROM MY EVENT.
WHAT WAS YOUR EVENT?
THE LADIES' DISCUS.
HS PHARMACEUTICALS
PERFORMANCE ENHANCING DRUGS

Letter From **Australia**

from Our Own Correspondent

WHEN our prime minister John Howard said farewell to our boys heading off from Darwin for East Timor on 20 September, it came so close to being his finest hour he shed a tear or two of pride. It felt almost as good as the time he met Don Bradman.

After a century of providing cannon fodder to the Mother Country and Uncle Sam – in the Boer War, the Somme, the Dardenelles, the Pacific, Korea, Malaya and Vietnam – we were doing it on our own at last. More tears will follow. Our role in Timor has not been a happy one.

Until the archipelago went up in flames, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) stepped in and President B.J. Habibie started making promises he hadn't cleared with his military, we were doing just *fine* with Indonesia.

Former president Suharto had had the best anti-communist credentials outside Taiwan, and it mattered not a jot that his wealth was protected by networks of death squads. Our politicians pumped the flesh that signed the papers that authorised the assassinations and looked the other way.

So cosy has been this "velcro diplomacy" that ABRI, the Indonesian military, has been supplied with all our defence secrets on a regular basis by a Canberra mole working for its intelligence organisation Badan Intelijen Strategis (BIS) – an arrangement revealed only the day before our boys started packing up their bivouacs, rifles and tin dinner sets for their mission. Unfortunately they arrived too late to thwart another BIS initiative: Operation Clean Sweep, the murderous mayhem launched as soon as the Timor vote was in on 30 August.

Instead of this horror we were looking forward to sharing the profits from the oil in the Timor Gap. The world's most brazen photo opportunity – our foreign ministers sipping French champagne to celebrate the exploration deal signed aboard a VIP jet circling the strait – will be cherished here forever.

When we were the first to put our hand up, offering to free the poor little people who might have used that money to finance their otherwise "non-viable" independence, it is no wonder ABRI tore up another velcro memorandum – our mutual security agreement.

One man who is already regretting the end of our good neighbour relations with the batik brigadiers is Rupert Murdoch. His News Ltd flagship broadsheet the *Australian* shamelessly promoted pro-Suharto opinion and excoriated any suggestion that East Timor might go its own way. Former Labor prime minister Paul Keating was so inspired by its editorials he slipped a softly-softly-on-human-rights message to Bill Clinton at the 1993 APEC summit.

So how did we suddenly get up here atop the moral high ground? Well, every man has his breaking point. In John Howard's case it was listening to a week's worth of dreadlocked bongo players and other demented smellies marching around the malls screaming "Troops In Now!"

Unfortunately the u-turn means our boys are now up against forces who've been learning dark military arts... from us. Yes, like the United States we've been sharing knowledge with Kopassus, the counter-insurgency killing machine which plundered East Timor for decades.

In 1994, we took part in Night Komodo, an "interoperability" exercise held in Bandung at which both teams learned how to take out troublemakers without leaving graves. The "guerillas" they practised on were political prisoners taken for the occasion from a Kopassus torture centre in Dili. A face-to-face with Kopassus in East Timor might now tell us who learned most on that exercise.

There is plenty more potential for unfortunate cock-ups. What if ABRI "renegades" do more than rattle the railings around our Jakarta embassy? Might they stick it up our peace-makers with the aid of machine guns, APCs, computer surveillance systems or even Hawk fighter bombers all supplied by your own dear selves?

If there is a big blue before 6 November it will make our referendum on whether to become a republic really exciting. A vote to dump Her Majesty the queen may well see monarchist John (middle name Winston, of which he's very, very proud) Howard shedding more than a tear or two over East Timor.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

COMPILED BY VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH

● *"This stabbing was your fault," Prince Jahamnyama told Romeo Maseko, as he halted the trial of one of Romeo's wives in the Mbabane traditional court. "You have married two women, and Kuteka customs demand that you must therefore 'visit' both of them regularly. If you deny sex to one of them, then things like this are bound to occur."*

Phindile Maseko had already pleaded guilty to the attempted murder of Romeo's other wife, Phindile Msibi, but Prince Jahamnyama reserved his strongest criticism for the husband. "Listen. If you do not know how to run a polygamous family, I will teach you. When you notice that one of your women is on heat, you must send the other one to gather firewood. Then tell the itchy one to enter your hut and look for a box of snuff. Immediately she enters, you pounce on her and then she will be cured of her illness. That is how to run a polygamous family. Take it from one who knows. Case dismissed." (Times of Swaziland, 13/8/99. Spotter: E.D. Bicknell)

—●—

● "Let me make this abundantly clear," Senior Assistant Commissioner Griffiths Mpofu told reporters in Harare. "Despite the rumours, no women have been forced by unscrupulous businessmen to breastfeed frogs for ritual purposes. Furthermore, no one has been reported killed or missing in any incident relating to a frog or any such animal."

Assistant Commissioner Griffiths was speaking in an attempt to quell the panic which had been spreading throughout Zimbabwe in recent weeks. "We have investigated this matter thoroughly, and can assure the public that there is no reason to be afraid. Yes, we have received one report of a girl who was forced to breastfeed a large frog, after being offered a lift by a businessman driving a posh Mercedes-Benz. However, the details of the incident are unclear, so it is quite wrong to panic over unsubstantiated rumours of a man on the prowl with a briefcase and a frog. The nation should stay calm, and anyone spreading such rumours is causing undue alarm." *(Zimbabwe Herald, 16/8/99. Spotter: Paul Ashton)*

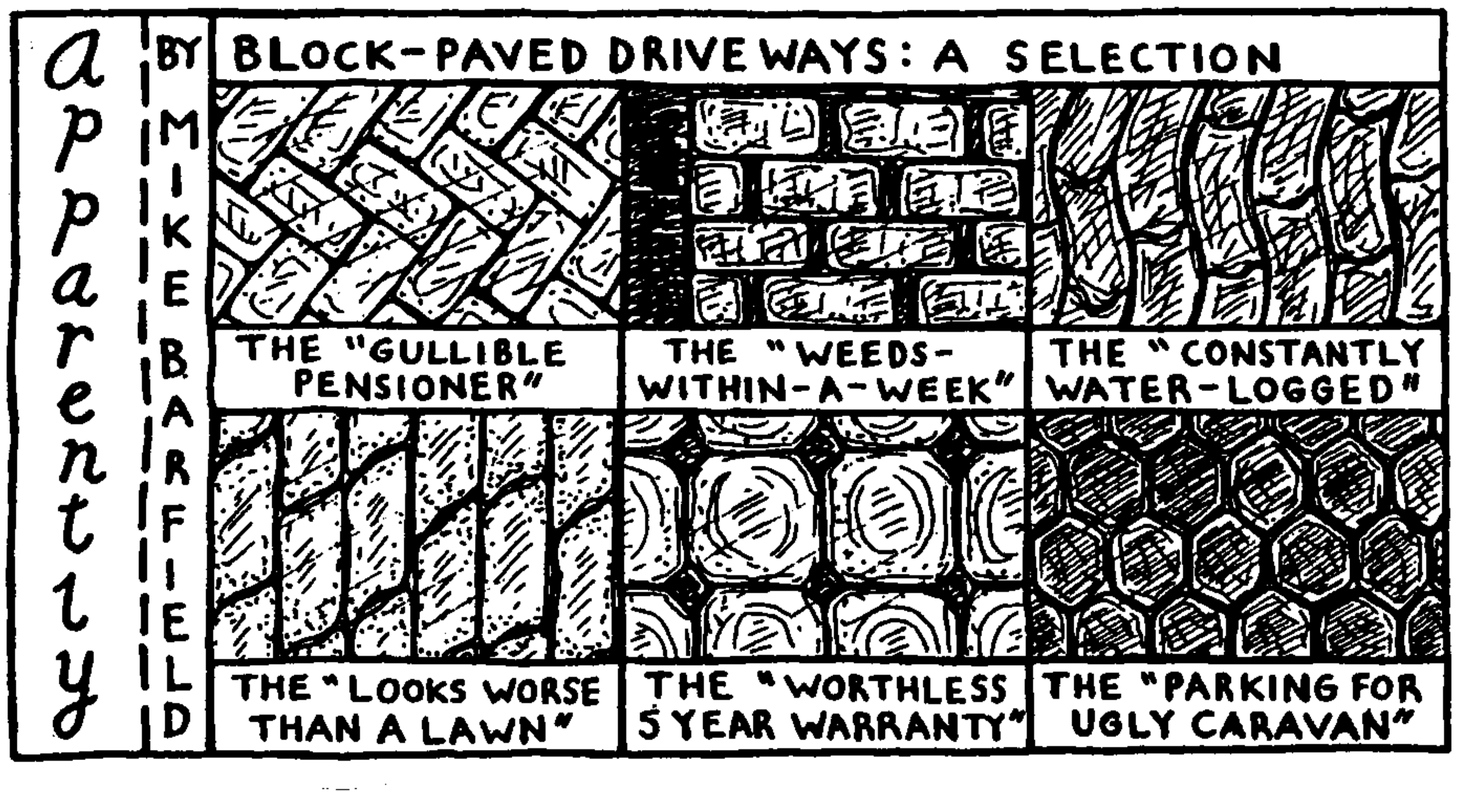
—●—

● "I wish to state categorically that, yes, there are individuals on this planet who no longer obtain nourishment from food," declared Jasmuheen, as she invited the audience to attend the Breatharians forthcoming international conference in Noosa Lakes, Queensland. "I am one. I have not eaten a meal for six years, although I do occasionally eat some chocolate or a few biscuits, just for a taste orgasm."

The Breatharians (a cult whose members renounce food and are instead "pranially nourished" by the air) plan to go ahead with this year's gathering, despite facing a lawsuit for unlawful killing, after a follower died of dehydration during a twenty-one day initiation. "Let us get things into perspective," said Jasmuheen. "According to UNICEF statistics, a child dies every second because of hunger-related disease. In light of these statistics, assuming that it is possible to be sustained from another source of nourishment, it would be morally irresponsible for us not to share this information with the world. Living on light could solve the world's hunger and starvation problems, and I am living proof that a human can survive on light alone."

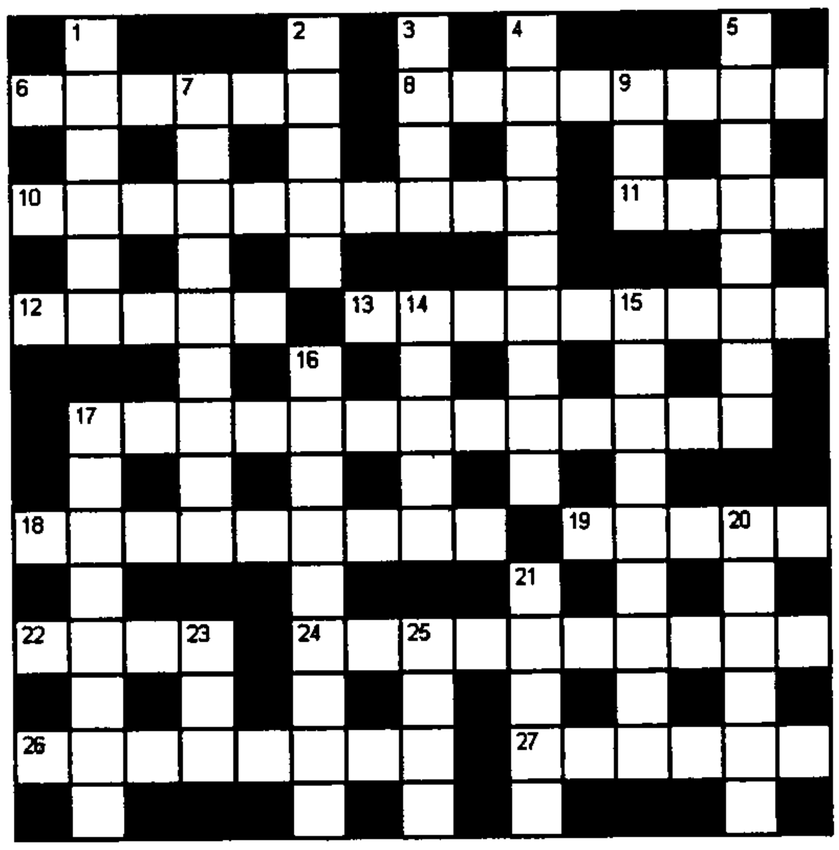
The audience were later told that guests would include the Norwegian musician Erik Berglund, a singer and harpist with an affinity for angels.

"Gourmet meals will be provided for visitors," promised Jasmuheen. "I don't expect everyone to go without food, just because I do." *(Brisbane Sunday Mail, 1/8/99. Spotter: Norm Reynolds)*



EYE CROSSWORD 141

by Cyclops *£100 prize*



ACROSS

6 Common gaffe made by member getting London-bound (4-2)
8 About luvvies: they tend to get overheated and remain noxious for ages (8)
10 Marian's bent on litigation – a costly habit (6,4)
11 Gob that's second to mine (4)
12 Fag cure (5)
13 Wolf Andy, er, circumcised and abused by this novelist? (3,6)
17 (see 2dn)
18 World statesman almost takes issue with outed Blair favourite (9)
19 A number manage to have sex (5)
22 Some Vietnamese hot-head (4)
24 (see 23)
26 Brenda's backing on sexual acts for regimental gatherings (8)
27 Eff you, we say, potty Herr Hitler! (6)

DOWN

1 Blair stifles 'alternative work' uprising in state-organised attack on a group (6)
2/17ac Individual vice-President, one with tether, in the process of spreading legs – a droll feature of the *Eye* (5,13)
3 Hurd, unperturbed, holds tongue (4)
4 Rave over cat who puts squeeze on your member, possibly (5,4)
5 Back-stabbers' peculiarity, like making a stand round Right (8)
7 Dead beat journalist after ball (9)
9 Murdoch's weekly non-U slapper gets a rise (3)
14 Famous stand à la Monica (without flipping Bill having penetrated) (5)
15 Colin Holt organised member's cover-up (9)
16 Bush to get deal, possibly, from US film industry (9)
17 Idiot Prescott finally came to the front and blathered on (8)
20 A masseur, some overseas Johnny (6)
21 Reportedly trawls websites for bondage types (5)
23/ 24 A princess fair, we hear? By this politician's own admission – no! (3,10)
25 Clap party directions (4)

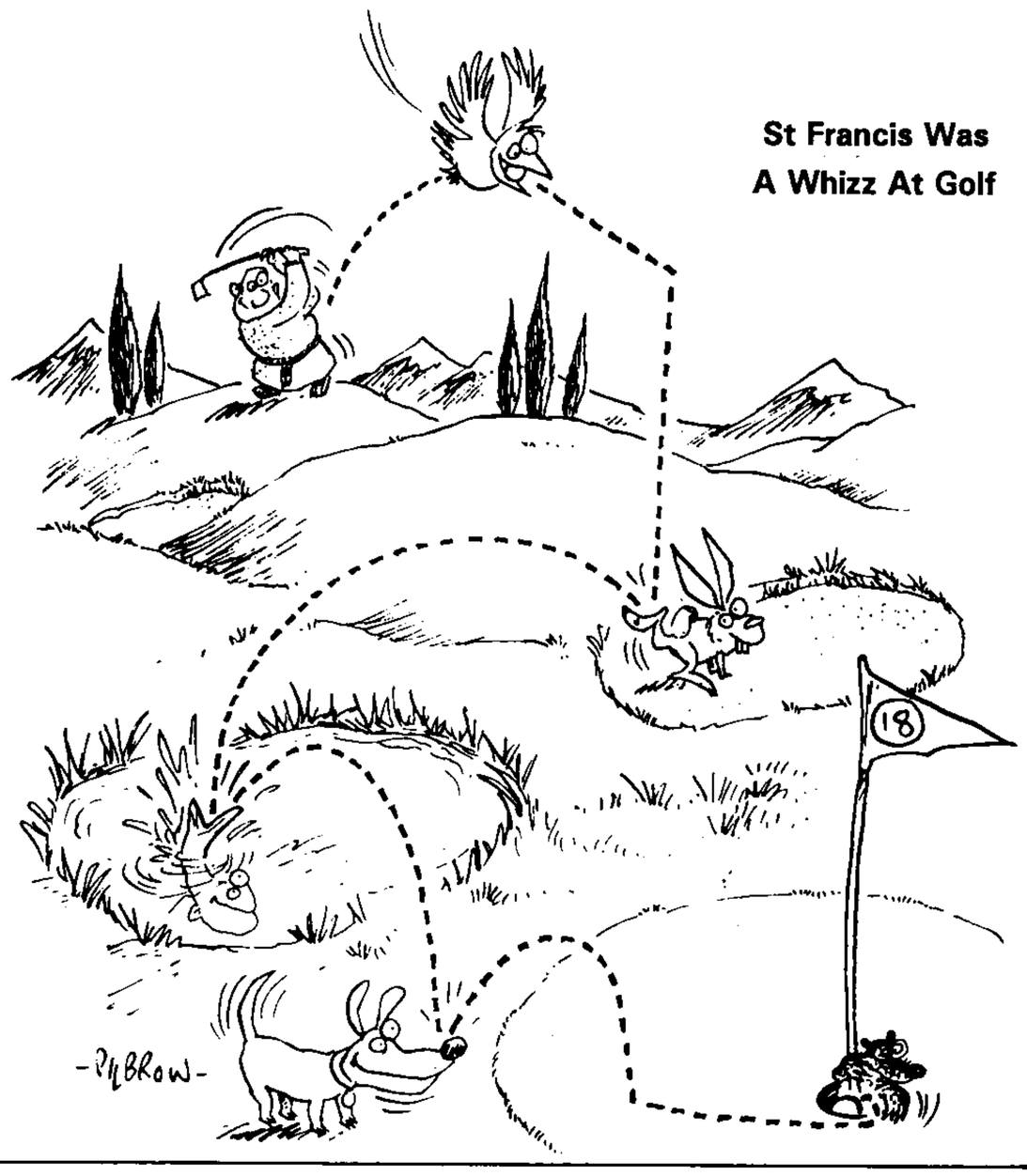
£100 prize to first solution opened on 8.10.99. Entries to 'Crossword', Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

Solution to Crossword No. 140

Winner: TOM COLLINS

ACROSS: 1 Pre-war 4 Paranoid 10 Lesotho 11 Idiotic 12 Toxic 13 Britannia 14/22 Conference season 17 Boob 20 Lamb 21 Spin doctor 23 Dyspepsia 25 Tutsi 27 Oral sex 28 Inquest 29 Pregnant 30 Beeper.

DOWN: 1/6 Political animal 2 Essex 3 Articles 5 Alibi 6 (see 1 dn.) 7 Opting out 8 Dacha 9 Gobble up 15 No mistake 16 Cannabis 18 Barrister 19 Boutique 22 (see 14) 23 Droop 24 Saxon 26 Twerp.



St Francis Was A Whizz At Golf

HEADMASTER IN BLAIR FUNDING ROW

by Our Education Staff **Lunchtime O'Ratory-Party**

A FURIOUS row erupted yesterday when a London headmaster lashed out at Tony Blair for sending him a personalised letter appealing for financial donations to support the Labour Party.

That Letter In Full

Dear Headmaster [fill in name],

As you may know, our leading political parties are currently under-funded due to the failure of the government to provide proper support. As a result, the Labour Party is £800 million short and so we are asking you for a regular donation of £10,000 per term.

This is the only way that we can maintain political standards and we are sure that you will appreciate the benefits of a sizeable contribution.

You might, for example, get a knighthood or even a peerage or a chance to meet Tony and Cherie Blair at an informal dinner for 5000.

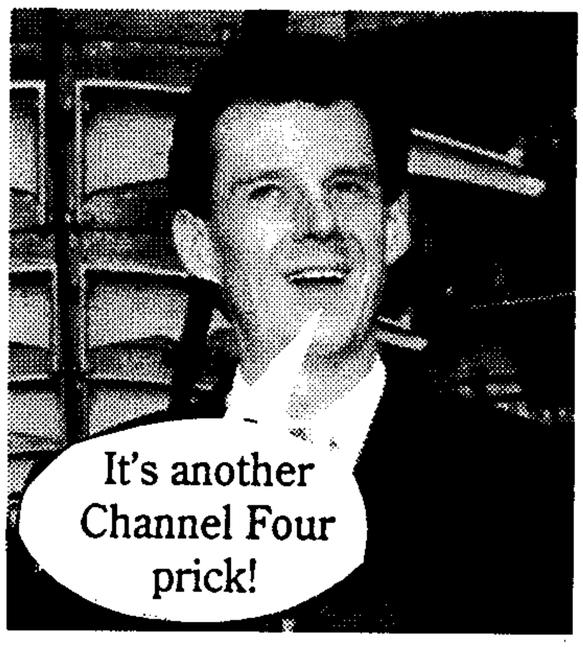
Yours sincerely,
Tony Blair

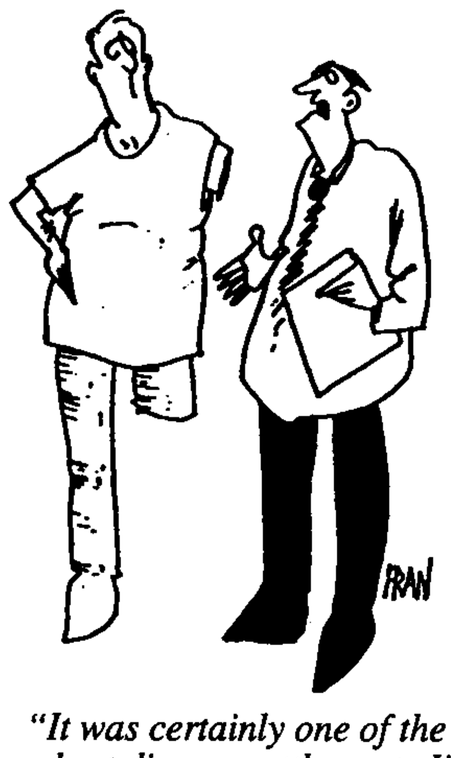
Direct Grant Debit

The headmaster, Mr Oven-Ready Chips, said yesterday:

"What a nerve! You'd think that the Labour Party could pay its own bills without passing the begging bowl round decent ordinary headmasters like myself. See me after school."

OUTRAGE AS WEEKEND TV PROGRAMME SHOWS MALE GENITALIA





"It was certainly one of the toughest divorce settlements I've ever dealt with"

THE INDEPENDENT

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TELEPHONE: 0171 293 2000 OR 0171 345 2000 FAX: 0171 293 2435 OR 0171 345 2435
THE INDEPENDENT ON THE INTERNET: WWW.INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Sweatshop Practices

THEY WORK for long hours for virtually no pay. They are isolated in a soulless workplace and forced to produce up to two hundred pieces of "work" a day. Yet their bosses live a life of O'Reilly in distant Ireland while they miserably cut and paste their shoddy wares under foul-mouthed overseers like "Janet" and "Simon". It is nothing short of a scandal and it is high time that the government stepped in and closed the Independent down.

INCREDIBLE OFFER!

The Autumn's Most Important Books

THE LAMONT YEARS
by Lord Lamont (Threshers, £29.99, 598 pp.)
A no-holds-barred account of how Norman Lamont was not to blame for anything that went wrong. And John Major was.

JOHN MAJOR WAS MY BOSS
by Dame Gillian Twinset MBE (Feeble & Feeble, £69.99, 732 pp.)
An insider's account of life in the crazy, rollercoaster years of John Major's no-holds-barred second term. Contains the sensational revelation that Major did not like Mrs Thatcher very much.

THE MAWHINNEY YEARS
by Baron Mawhinney (Mawmoney Press, £73.99, 922 pp.)
A no-holds-barred insider's account of the last sensational Government by one of the towering figures of post-war British politics.

THE GNOME Boring Book Club offers you the most boring books of the moment for a fraction of their cover price.

Any three of the above books can be yours for only 50p! No need to hurry, we've got millions of these books. Send now to guarantee disappointment.

PLUS, with every boring book you order you get the following five sensationally dull titles entirely free:

- A.L. Rowse by Humphrey Bollard.
- The Life Of Lord Sainsbury by Andrew Roberts.
- Rupert Brooke – Was He A Closet Poet?
- Was The Pope A Catholic? *(Surely 'Nazi'? Ed.)*
- Why I Hate My Friend John Birt by Michael Grade

Reprinted from Time Out

THE SOHO BEARD FESTIVAL

Monday 12.30am Four Men With Beards, Pizza Express **Tuesday 5.00pm** Three Men With Beards, Dog and Duck **Wednesday Midnight** Beard Duo, Bar Italia **Thursday 3.00am** Solo Beard, Ronnie Beards *(That's enough jazz. Ed.)*

ST ALBION PARISH NEWS

Incumbent: Rev. A.R.P. Blair MA (Oxon)

Hullo!

And I hope you'll all forgive me if I take this opportunity to spell out once and for all my views on one of the most important issues confronting the human race today – fox-hunting.

Some older folk who live in the country seem to be very upset that I want to stop the hunt from meeting outside the vicarage.

Look, I'm not against hunting. I want to make that clear! But I am against hunting foxes.

Nor am I against fishing. After all, Our Lord himself often went fishing, and even recruited fishermen to his team ministry.

But you don't read about him recruiting any huntsmen in red coats, do you?

The Bible isn't full of men shouting tally-ho, as they inflict pain on innocent animals, is it?

Nor am I, in any sense, against shooting, so long as no one inflicts any suffering on the birds as they are blown humanely to pieces!

I am sure that, if guns had been invented in the olden days, Peter would have saved a lot of trouble by shooting that cockerel before it crowed the third time.

I can already hear my friend from Tesco's asking me, in his clever dick way, "So, Vicar, is it alright to shoot fish? Or to fish for foxes?"

It is sad that the greatest moral debate of our time should be reduced to this nit-picking level.

So, that's why I want to end all this silly argument, once and for all, before some of the more troublesome members of the congregation start parading around the vicarage with their banners, and their silly chants of "Tony is a phoney" (which, incidentally, isn't clever or funny, just because it rhymes!).

It's all quite simple.

Foxes have as much right to live as anyone else, except fish and birds. (And the other animals we eat, obviously!)

I hope that's clear!

Yours ever,

Tony

P.S. Next week's newsletter will contain a full account of our annual parish outing, which this year, thank goodness, is in Bournemouth, where there are far fewer people eating bags of smelly chips and being sick on the pavement (no offence, Mr Prescott!).

Notices

● The **St Albion's Shooting Club** has registered a record membership this year. The Vicar would like to be the first to congratulate the club on its popularity. "May you succeed in all your aims!" he says.

● The **St Albion's Angling Club** has also registered a record membership. The Vicar would again like to congratulate them on this success. "I'm hooked!" he says.

---- Condolences ----

I am sure we would all like to send heartfelt sympathy (writes the Vicar) to the family of the very popular policeman, Inspector Morse, who has recently died, as some of you may have read in the Daily Telegraph. He was a fine officer and will be sorely missed by everyone in the parish. A memorial service will be arranged (date to be announced). Have I got this right, Alastair? T.B.

Verses By A Local Poet (the Vicar!)

Every year I visit the
Working Men's Club
Which is full of smoke and
beer just like a pub
Although the old chaps are
friendly and merry
I would rather be at home sipping
a glass of sherry!

(This poem was recited by the Vicar during his annual visit to the Working Men's Club, where he was given a standing ovation. Unfortunately, he was not able to stay to hear it because he had to return to his parish duties. Many thanks to Mr Prescott for taking on the job of drinking pints and reminiscing all night about "the good old days"! T.B.)

Cherie meets some of this year's GCSE fashion students at their "show" in the Parish Hall. In the picture Alex is modelling a leather jacket from our local Oxfam shop and a trendy stick-on "beard" from World of Beards in the High Street.

Millennium Tent Update

The first batch of tickets for the Tent went on sale in the Parish last week, and within hours the first one had been bought by Mrs C.B. She tells us, *"It will be a fantastic day out, and the kids will love it. Is that OK, Tony?"*

Meanwhile, preparations for all the exciting exhibits in the Tent are well under way. The art department of the St Albion's Primary School will soon be ready to unveil their life-size papier mâché model of a human figure. But don't think that's all there's going to be! On your day in the Tent, you will also be able to do the following amazing things:

- enjoy a real state-of-the-art "cuppa" in the Tea Experience Zone
- pit your wits against aliens in the Nintendo Game Zone
- imagine you are at the seaside in the Sandpit Experience Zone (supplied by World of Sand)
- watch an entire episode of Blackadder in the Old Videos Zone (supplied by Mr Murdoch's Adult Mags and Vids Emporium)
- leave your own personalised message (15 secs max) for people who will be alive in 2000 years' time in the Answerphone Zone
- watch how burgers and fries are made in the McDonald's Zone (and sample the end result for only £11.95!).

WATCH THIS SPACE

FOR MORE AND MORE "ZONES" AS THEY COME ON LINE!

From the best-selling author of **Born To Be Queen, Heir of Sorrows** *and* **La Dame Aux Camillas,** *now comes the greatest love story of them all.*

Never Too Old...

by Dame Sylvie Krin

THE STORY SO FAR: Billionaire media mogul Rupert Murdoch has taken his young bride to the romantic city of Rome.

Now read on...

THE world's richest man stared miserably at the plate in front of him. A single spinach leaf stared back at him unappetisingly — as ordered by his new young wife Wendy, who was insisting that he stick rigidly to her new Chinese *Little Red Do Or Diet Book*. Next to him the power broker of the new Europe, Romano Prodi, was tucking into an enormous bowl of his favourite Bolognese delicacy, *payola toscana*, with lashings of Parmesan sleaze.

"Saluti, signor Diggero! We makea lotta money together, si?"

The President of Europe raised his glass of Berlusconi Classico, clinking it with Rupert's chaste tumbler of freshly squeezed sparkling ginseng-and-viagra, prepared for him by his adoring Oriental helpmeet.

"We have a saying, Signor Diggero – long life and happiness."

A frown crossed the porcelain features of the third Mrs Murdoch as a cloud crosses the shimmering surface of the Lake of Eternal Wealth in Peking.

"Can't we just drink to happiness?" she suggested, with an inscrutable smile.

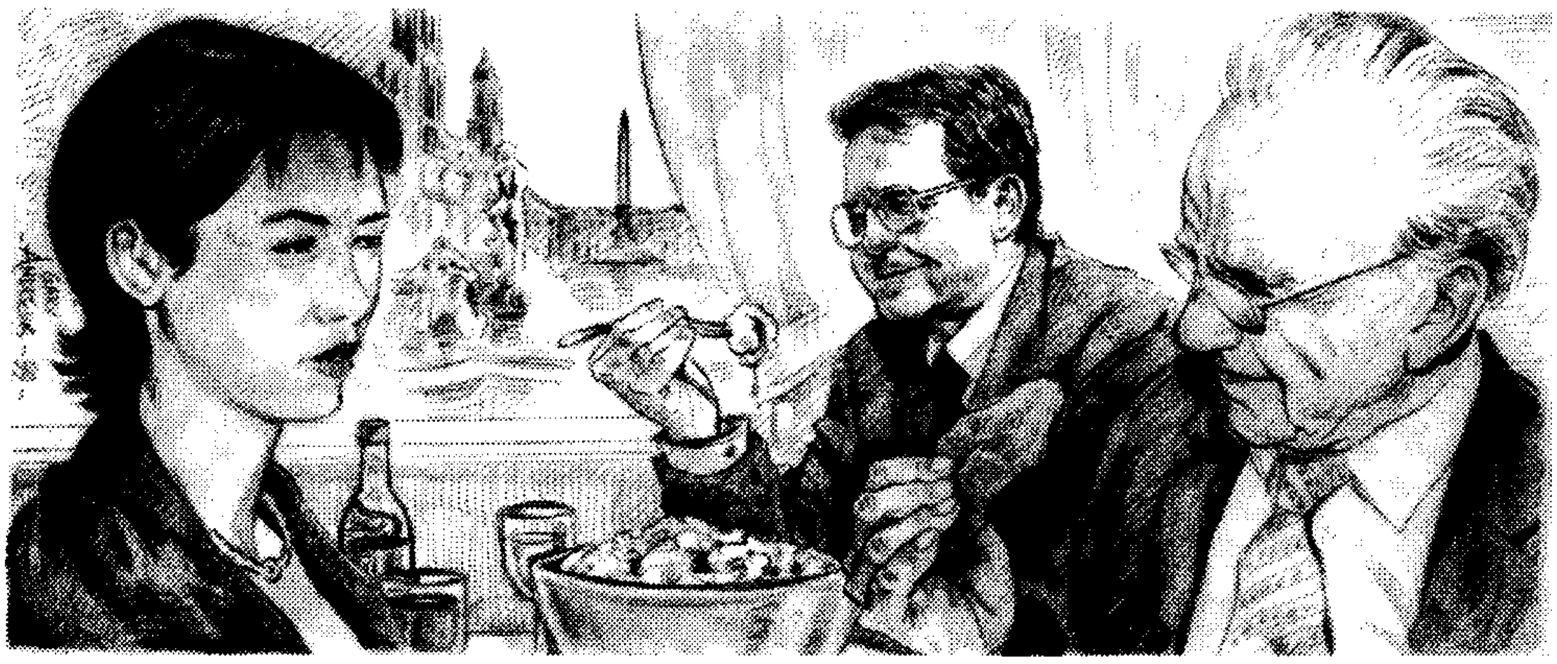
"Whatever the bella signora wishes," agreed the beaming Eurocrat. "You are very lucky man, Signor Diggero. But at your age you must be careful, no?"

"The way I see it, Romano," said the antipodean man of destiny, getting down to brass-tacks, "is that you Eyeties have got the future of television sewn up. There's only two things people want to see on the box – blokes kicking a football, and sheilas taking their kit off."

"And you shoulda know!" joked the red-tape maestro from Bologna, placing his hand affectionately on the alabaster knee of the sultry goddess from the land of sweet and sour pork balls.

"So, the deal's this," said the most powerful man in the universe, taking a top-secret document out of his Crocodile Dundee-skin briefcase.

"I'll back you buggers on the euro, and you hand over control of all the Wop TV to me. I get sex and soccer, and you get the Sun saying *It Could Be Euro! Free Money For Everyone With The Super, Soaraway Single Currency!*"



"Bravissimo, signor Diggero!" enthused the clearly impressed super-functionary. "You're not finished yet..."

"YOU'RE not finished yet, Rupi! We've still got the Colosseum, the Vatican, Trajan's Column, the Trevi Fountain and Keats's grave to see before your evening frozen soya drink."

Sweating profusely, the perspiring tycoon panted up the last hundred steps towards the ancient church of Santa Sophia di Loren, with its world-famous frescoes by Federico Fellatio.

"Jeez, my feet are killing me," gasped the ailing septuagenarian. "I'm pooped."

"No, Rupi, it is good for your body to be tested to the limits. We have old Chinese proverb, 'Old man, young wife, jiggy-jiggy, short life'."

"What's that, Wend? I didn't catch that little gem of your Oriental wisdom."

"Don't worry, darling," she responded. "We'll skip the church and go straight to the cemetery. A lot of famous foreigners are buried there, who died unexpectedly when they were visiting Rome."

A sudden chill wind blew from the Via Pornografico, and from inside the church floated the sombre strains of Goccia's Requiem...

To be continued...

PR WEEK

A Grave Conflict Of Interest

THERE can be no doubt that Sophie Wessex, a distinguished member of the Public Relations community, has been unwise to become involved with the dubious world of the Royal Family.

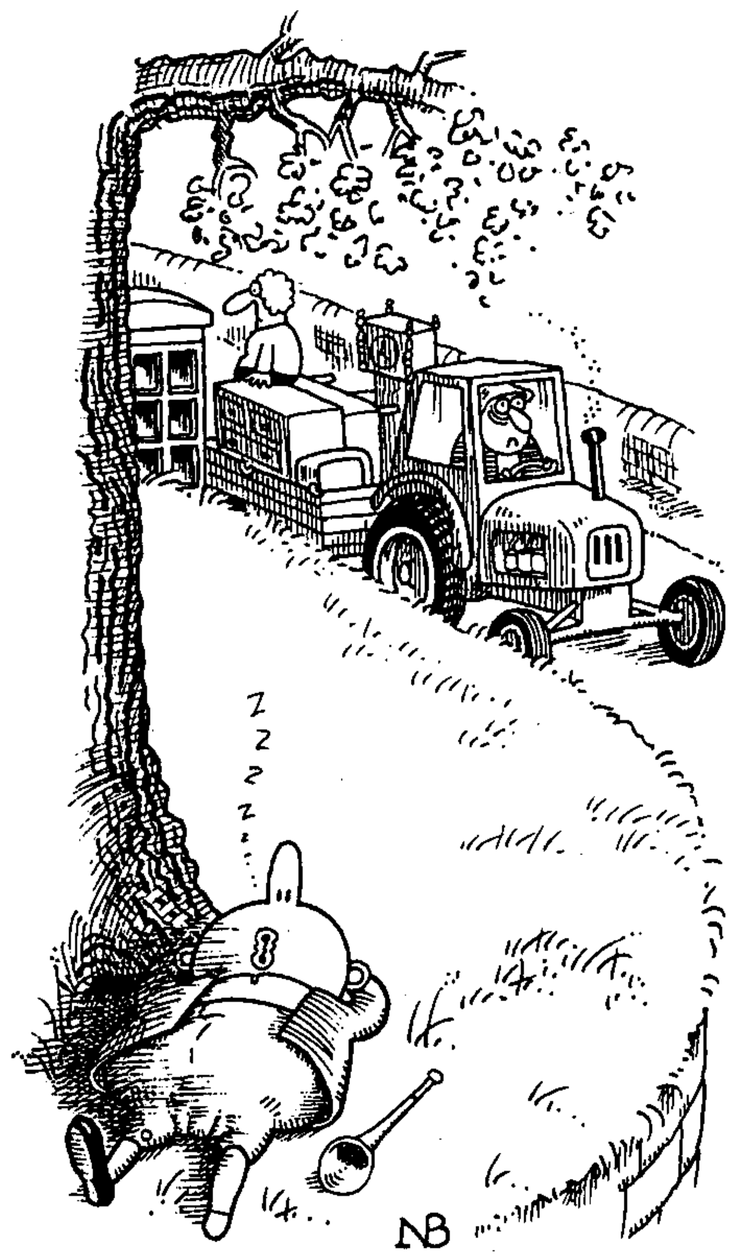
Whilst we are delighted that she continues to perform her traditional duties such as plugging the Rover MXZ470 (with integrated leather sun visor on some models), it would be regrettable if she attempted to use her status as a blonde PR woman to try to promote the Royal Family.

"The Firm", as it is called, has an unfortunate reputation amongst the general public for being over-paid and under-employed, not to mention the persistent scandals of drug-taking and extra-marital carryings-on.

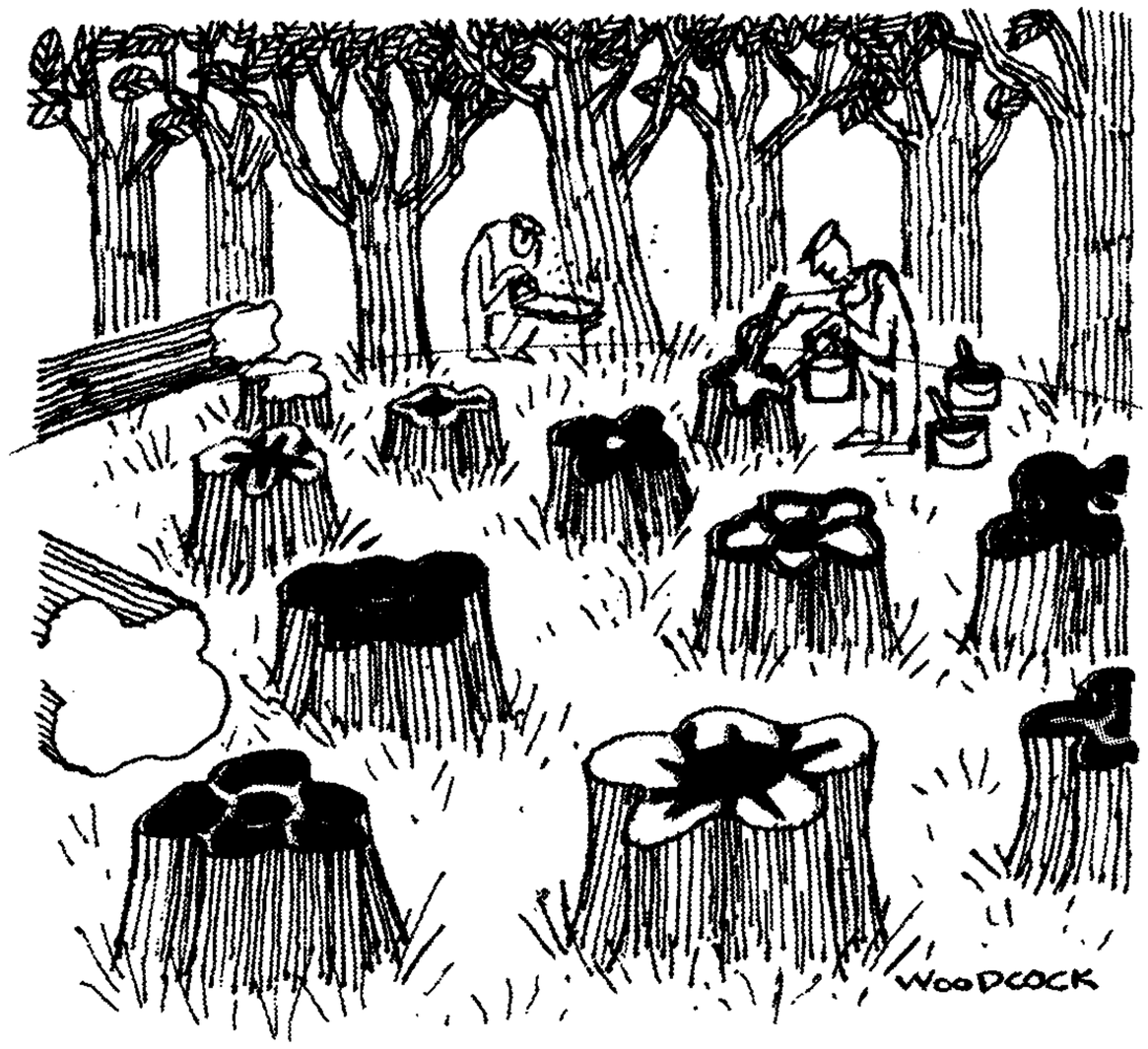
It is, therefore, with some sadness that we suggest that Sophie resign her position as a minor royal and concentrate on providing a suitable role model for the nation's jolly blonde Sloanes.

Chris Drivel
Editor-in-Chief
PR Weak

Pre-School Facility Nursery Rhyme



Little boy Brown
Come blow your horn.
The cow's in the phone-box,
The tractor's in pawn.



KNACKER CALLS FOR DRASTIC REDUCTION IN SPEED LIMIT

by Our Motoring Staff **Simon Roadhoggart**

IN the latest crackdown on motorist, Inspector "Knacker of the Yard" Knacker is proposing that the speed limit on all Britain's roads should be reduced to 0 m.p.h.

Said the Inspector, "Our experiments at the Hendon Traffic Centre have shown that traffic fatalities could be reduced at a stroke to almost zero.

"Other gains from what we are calling the Zero Traffic Tolerance option would include a major contribution to the war against global warming, and a higher arrest rate of villains using motor vehicles to effect their getaway following burglary situations."

The inspectors then called for all proceeds of speeding fines to be given to the police, in order to finance the vital work of sitting around in the station watching confiscated porn videos and smoking cannabis resin."

ON OTHER PAGES

● 2 Million Policemen Swoop On Famous Pop Singer In Hope Of Getting Into Newspaper **by Robert Frisk**

THE TOP 100 BRITISH FILMS OF ALL TIME

(continued from p. 49)

No. 97 THEY FLEW TO BRUGES (1953). David Lean's black-and-white WWII classic tells the story of the ill-fated RAF mission to Bruges, starring Donald Sinden, John Mills and Richard Attenborough as "Sparks".

No. 98 BLOKE (1973). Ken Loach's harrowing masterpiece about a young unemployed Northerner who befriends a stray ferret, before being run over by a rich local slum landlord.

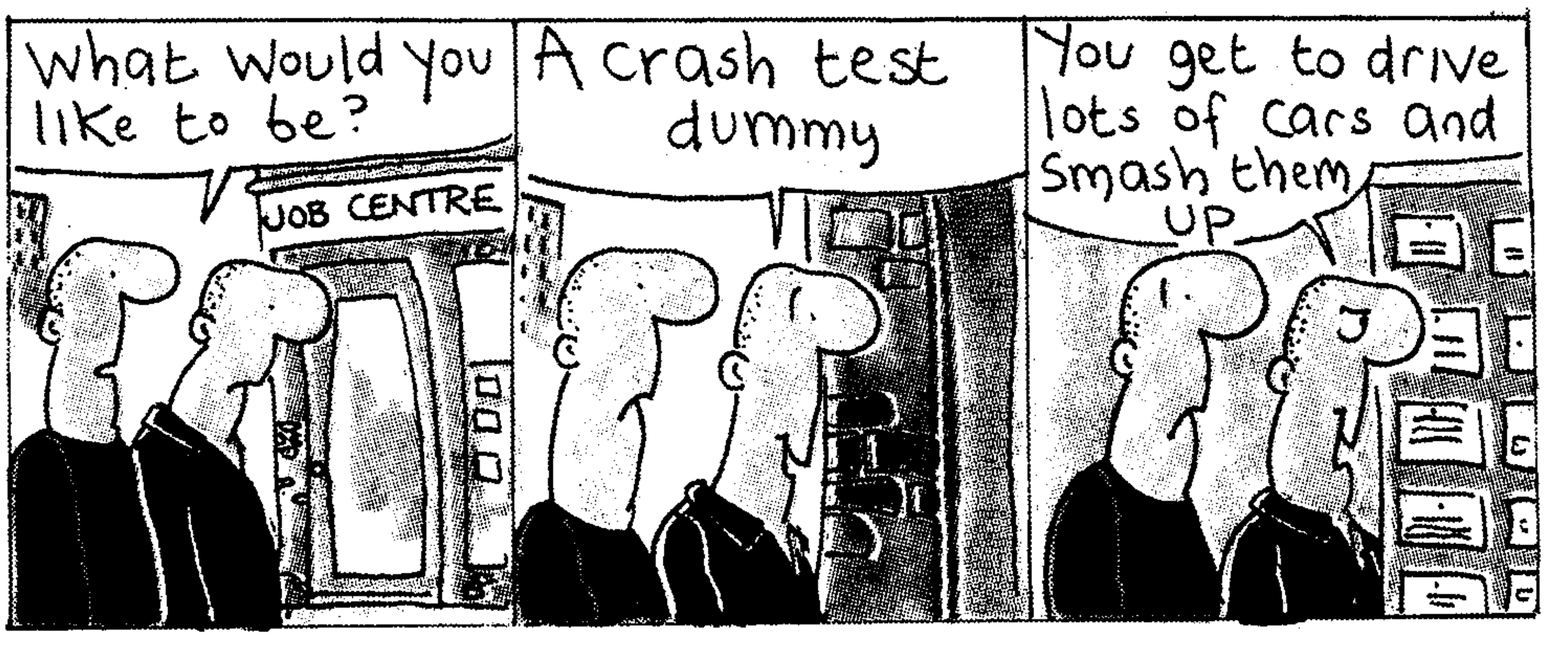
No. 99 THE NEASDEN THUNDERBOLT (1951). Boulting Brothers' good-humoured satire on the state of the railway industry in post-war Britain. Cameo role for young George Cole as the station-master's assistant.

No. 100 CARRY ON GOING TO THE TOILET (1964).

(That's enough films. Ed.)

No. 58 *Rex Harrison stars with Brenda de Banzie in* ***The Man In The Yellow Top Hat*** *(1958)*

HUSBAND

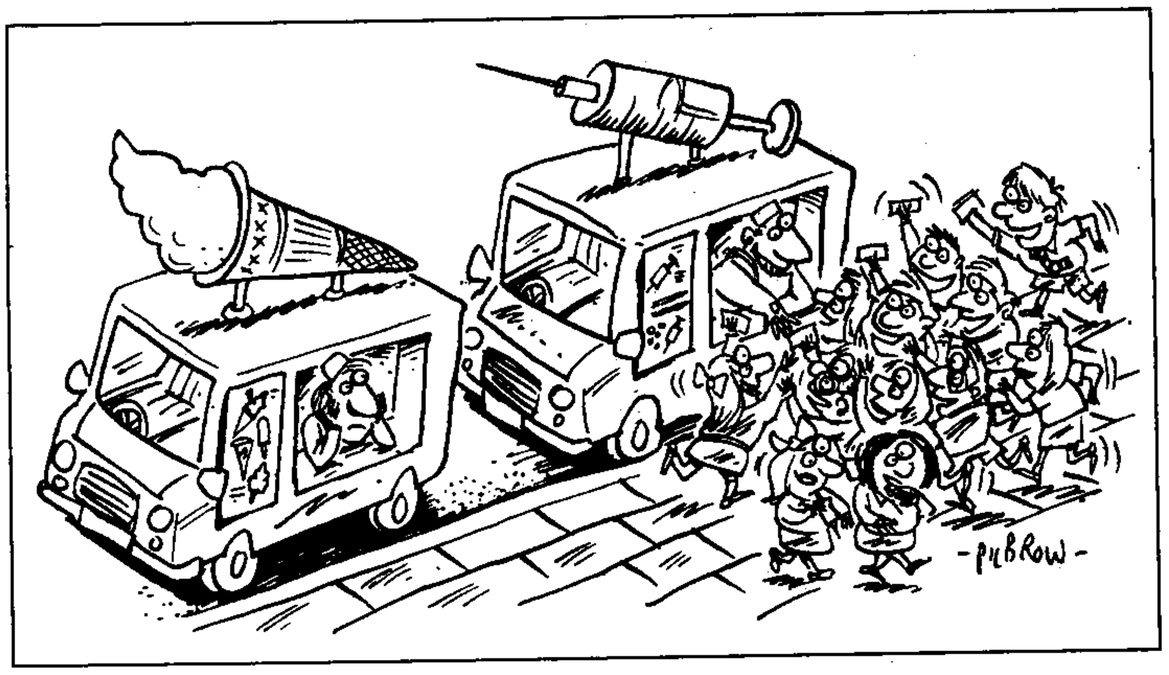


LATE NEWS

DIANA TO GET MONUMENT

IT WAS revealed yesterday that the authorities are to commemorate the arrest of Diana Ross at Heathrow Airport with a specially commissioned plaque.

Said a spokesman for the airport authorities: "We think it only right that the memory of Diana's arrest be commemorated in some way – that way the public can come along and pay their respects, as well as read the charges of alleged assault on a female security officer." *(Reuters)*



THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

Octogenarian Surrogate Mum Gives Birth To Piglets For Gay Couple

By Our Medical Breakthrough Staff Dr Frank N. Stein

IN WHAT was described as "the most important medical breakthrough of all time," an 87-year-old Norfolk woman yesterday gave birth to *(cont'd. p. 94)*

Test Sacked Special

Trevor Bailey: And we welcome listeners to Radio Four Longwave (or is it FM? I'm too old to remember) with the news that Fred Trueman has been dismissed.

Trueman *(for it is he)*: It's one of the daftest decisions I've ever seen in t'whole history of t'game.

Balley: But you had a pretty good innings, Fred. 50 years isn't bad, in anyone's book. A half-century, you can't complain.

Trueman: I can and I will. It's a bloody scandal.

(Huge burst of applause from crowd)

Balley: Oh, and that wasn't expected. I've gone as well. This really is a collapse. Isn't that English cricket all over? One minute, you're going along quite nicely, talking about cake and pigeons. The next minute, you're walking back to the job centre.

Trueman: I've never known anything like it. It wasn't like that in my day, etc, etc.

(Continued on Talk Radio with Sally Jockstrap and Denise Not-Outen)

THE DAILY TENNISGRAPH

Letters to the Editor

A National Scandal

SIR — There has surely never been a greater insult to any member of the Royal Family than the impertinent and ill-mannered letter sent to the much-loved Duchess of Kent by a certain, so-called Mr Curry, purporting to represent the All-England Wimbledon Lawn Tennis and Croquet Potatoes Club.

His diktat that Her Royal Highness should not be permitted to invite her godchild to watch the finest spectacle that sport can afford (particularly when Tim Henman is beating the flower of foreign competition off the court!) smacks of the kind of Fascism that some of us fought in two world wars to prevent.

MAJOR C.H. TIEBREAK
Worplesdon

SIR — It is a little known fact that the Duchess of Kent does more for charity than everyone else in the country put together. What, I wonder, has Mr Curry ever done?

REV. SIMON LOVEALL
St Agassiz

SIR—Few who were present will ever forget the occasion on the Centre Court in the semi-finals of the Mixed Doubles in 1953, when a young ballboy accidentally swallowed the first service of Mrs Louisa Swash, the American number 4. The Duchess immediately leaped from the Royal Box, and in her inimitable manner comforted the hapless victim during the final moments of a short and tragic life. Surely, instead of banning the Duchess, the Wimbledon authorities should be erecting a statue to her in the middle of the Centre Court.

RABBI GRASSCOURT (Ret'd.)
Swiss Cottage

SIR — Game, set and match to the Duchess, don't you think?

DAVE BLIMEY
(via e-mail)

SIR — I am normally a peaceable man. But were Mr Curry to be run over by a Number 19 bus on his way to Wimbledon, I am sure the entire nation would be celebrating for many *(cont'd. Court 94)*

Old Cambridge Nursery Rhymes

In the last issue of *Private Eye*, the second verse of this traditional rhyme was inadvertently omitted. We apologise for this error.

Polly take your trousers off
Polly take your trousers off
Polly take your trousers off
We'll all have sex. ♫ ♫

Polly put them on again
Polly put them on again
Polly put them on again
We'll all join Mrs T. (Trad.)

ROY of the ROVERS
NEWCHESTER ROVERS' MOST FAMOUS SON HAS RETURNED TO MANAGE THE AILING CLUB.
THANK GOD THAT DUTCH BLOKE'S GONE
COULDN'T UNDERSTAND A WORD HE SAID
THEN WOR CANNY ROY GANS TAPPY LAPPY DOON THE WING...
HURRAH! AT LAST SOMEONE WHO CAN SPEAK ENGLISH
EE THO'BUT
AWA THE BOSS
COOPER

GLENDA SLAGG

Menopause Behaving Badly (geddit!?!)

SOPHIE WESSEX – aren'tchasick-ofher? How dare she cash in on being a poor man's Diana to flog some rotten old car to gullible Yanks!?!? What a nerve, ma'am (no offence!!?!).

You're in the ER Business now, not the PR one, darling!?!?!

So, take a tip from Glenda, the gal who has been there, seen it and bought the T-shirt – just belt up!?!?! (With the greatest respect!?!?!)

HATS OFF to Princess Sophie (Countess of Wessex to you, stoopid!??!)

At last, a Royal Gal who pays her own way – someone to bring home the bacon rather than sponging off the tax-payer.

OK, so she sells a load of old rubbish to our cousins across the pond!?!? Who doesn't???!?

Why doesn't Sophie just tell her critics "Hey, Mr Knocker, I'm in the PR Business, not the ER Business!" Geddit!?!?!

HATS and everything else off to Charlie Dimmock – gardening's Lady Godiva!?!

A gal who's not ashamed to show off her prize melons!?! "Cor, what a lovely pear!" said one of my colleagues when he saw the photos!?!? "I'd like to have those in my bed for a bit of mulching." *(That's enough filth. Ed.)*

TV'S CHARLIE DIMMOCK – what a slapper!?!? So, the Gormless Gardener has decided to get her tips out for the lads!?! You're not going to win any prizes there, darling!? Even if you apply the Miracle-Gro™!?!

Take a tip from Auntie Glenda, spend your ill-gotten gains from the nudie pix on a decent bra! And throw yourself on the compost heap where you belong!?!?

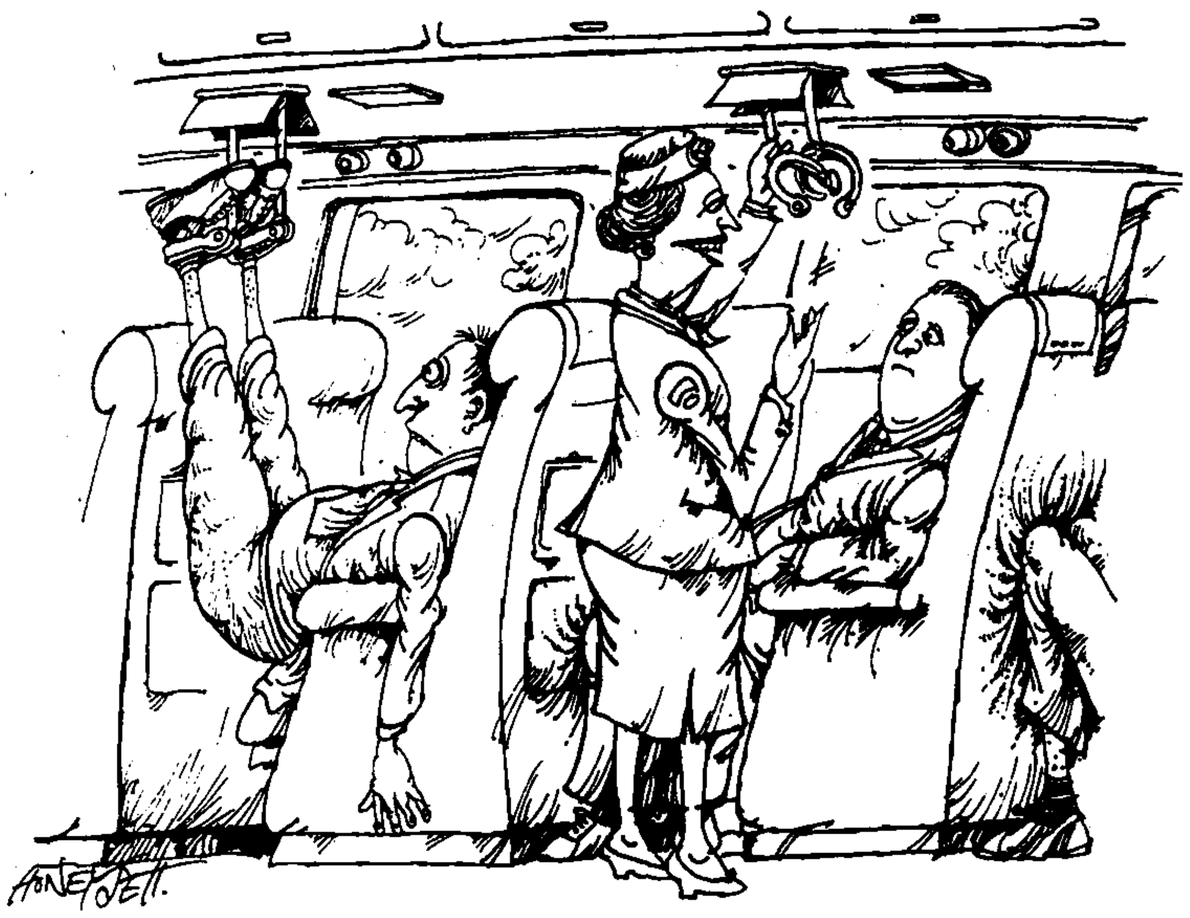
HERE THEY ARE — Glenda's Harvest Festival Fellas!?!?

● **BILL GATES** – Mmmm! It's not your money I'm after Bill – hang on a minute, yes it is!?!?!

● **BORIS JOHNSON** – Can I be a Spectator when you put your paper to bed?!?!

● **KARL MARX** – OK, so he was a drunk, bearded anti-semitic lunatic!? He knew how to give a gal a kapital night out!?!?! Geddit??!?!

Auf Wheenersehen!?!



"Would you care for the leg-stretching facility, sir?"

HURRICANE WRECKS LIVES

by Our U.S. Correspondent

AS HURRICANE Floyd failed to wreak havoc and leave in its wake a trail of destroyed towns, flattened trailer parks and decimated shopping malls, thousands of journalists were left counting the cost.

"You can see them on every street corner," one senior police officer said, "wandering around dazed unable to believe that it hasn't happened. Many of them are clinging to the few shreds of credibility they have left, knowing their careers will never recover from the battering they've received over this."

(Full coverage of what should have happened – pp. 3-98)

THE SPECTACULARLYSTUPID

High Lies

Thiki

What is this country coming for? *(Surely "to"? Ed.)* I fly into London via the Big Bagel and go down to my club in St James. And guess who they have let in?

A seedy scumbag of a hack. A punk who peddles gossip about the rich and famous in magazines and newspapers.

And worse than that, this scumbag isn't even English.

That's right. Someone has let in what my old friend Alan Clark would have called "a swarthy olive-muncher on the make". And he's a coke-smuggling ex-con as well!

I point out the intruder to the barman and tell him to throw the bum out. He just shrugs and says "That's a mirror, sir."

What is this country coming about? *(Surely "to" again – would you like to borrow a phrasebook? Ed.)*

POETRY CORNER

In Memoriam
Inspector Morse

So. Farewell
Then
Inspector Morse.

The opera-loving
TV detective.

You have now
Gone to a
Better place
For eternity.

U.K. Gold.

Endeavour J. Thribb (17½ pints)

★ Exclusive to all lazy newspapers ★

WAS WOODHOUSE A NAZI?

by Our Illiterary Staff **Gussie Fink-Little**

ONE OF the country's best-loved literary figures was yesterday revealed to be a Nazi sympathiser by a set of documents released under the Thirty-Year-Old Story Rule.

The papers appear to show that Barbara Woodhouse, author of *Fetch!* and *Heel Boy!* was in the pay of the German High Command for the latter part of the First World War. *(Subs – please check.)*

The circumstantial evidence against Woodhouse is overwhelming, say experts I haven't had time to talk to, who point out the following sinister facts:

1. She insisted on her orders being obeyed.

2. She liked wearing a "uniform" of tweed skirt and sensible shoes.

3. She went walkies into the Sudetenland. *(No, she didn't. This is rubbish. Ed.)*

All in all, the picture now emerging of P.G. Woodhouse, known as "Tips" to her colleagues, is of a committed dog-handler who would stop at nothing to bring about the Thousand-Year Reich. *(You're fired. Ed.)*

PROOF FROM THE ARCHIVES

SPY STORM LATEST

NEASDEN LECTURER 'WAS NOT SPY' SHOCK

by Our Entire Staff **Phil Spies**

THE ACADEMIC world of north London was reeling last night after a new book revealed that assistant lecturer Ron Beard, 37, was the only member of the Neasden University political anthropology faculty who was not in the pay of either the KGB or the Stasi.

In recent weeks, Cambridge historian and spy expert Christopher Andrew-Roberts has unmasked over 5 million Soviet spies, all working in the top echelons of the British establishment.

They include:

● **Roger Snott**, 58, crossword-compiler for the far left weekly Tribune. In 1975 Snott went to Poland on holiday.

● **Melanie Scandal**, 56. Key organiser for Dollis Hill branch of CND (1961-3). Sold Peace News openly outside Willesden East tube station.

● **Kevin Grunge**, 43. Former assistant research assistant to far left Conservative MP Sir Bufton Tufton. Once put up calendar in his office showing Red Square and the Kremlin under snow.

● **Roy Nerdson**, 51. Senior lecturer in Comparative Slavonic Studies at Herbert Morrison

Ron Beard

University (formerly Bethnal Green Polytechnic). Spoke fluent Russian and read novels by Tolstoy.

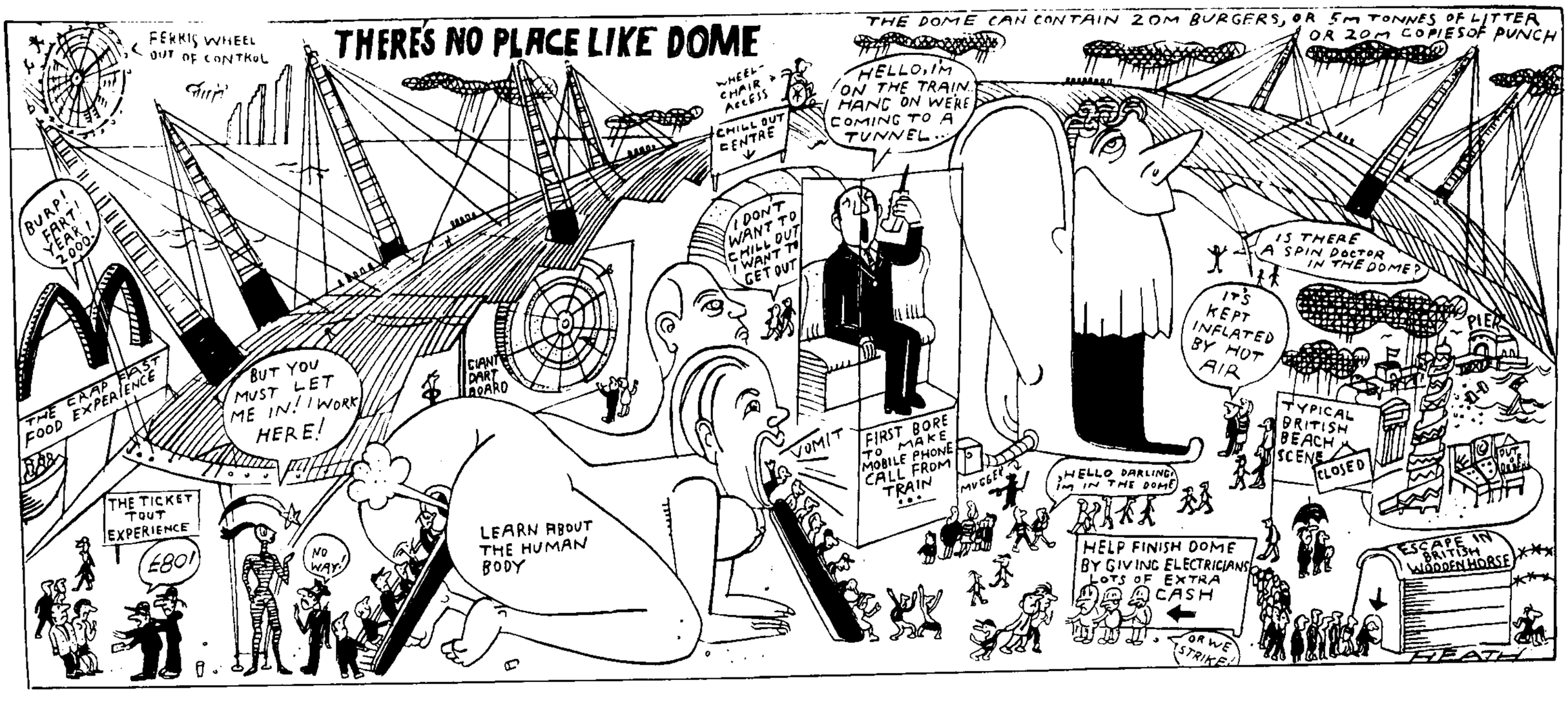
But that is not all. Other top-level Kremlin agents named in the explosive book include:

● **Josef Stalin**, 107. Former Soviet dictator (1924-53) who visited London in 1908.

● **Karl Marx**, 182. German-born Communist agent who "plotted overthrow of capitalist system" in British Museum. Subject of sycophantic biography by notorious left-wing columnist Francis Wheen.

● **Francis Wien** (later "Wheen"), 36. Marxist propagandist and friend of Tom Driberg who, as is well known *(cont'd. p. 94)*

HEATH'S PRIVATE VIEW


THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE DOME
FERRIS WHEEL OUT OF CONTROL
BURP! FART! YEAK! 2000.
THE CRAP FAST FOOD EXPERIENCE
BUT YOU MUST LET ME IN! I WORK HERE!
THE TICKET TOUT EXPERIENCE
£80!
NO WAY!
GIANT DART BOARD
LEARN ABOUT THE HUMAN BODY
VOMIT
WHEEL-CHAIR ACCESS
CHILL OUT CENTRE
I DON'T WANT TO CHILL OUT I WANT TO GET OUT
FIRST BORE TO MAKE MOBILE PHONE CALL FROM TRAIN
HELLO, I'M ON THE TRAIN. HANG ON WE'RE COMING TO A TUNNEL..
MUGGER
THE DOME CAN CONTAIN 20M BURGERS, OR 5M TONNES OF LITTER OR 20M COPIES OF PUNCH
IS THERE A SPIN DOCTOR IN THE DOME?
IT'S KEPT INFLATED BY HOT AIR
PIER
TYPICAL BRITISH BEACH SCENE
CLOSED
OUT OF ORDER
HELLO DARLING, I'M IN THE DOME
HELP FINISH DOME BY GIVING ELECTRICIANS LOTS OF EXTRA CASH
OR WE STRIKE!
ESCAPE IN BRITISH WOODEN HORSE
HEATH

DIARY

The moment of my birth into
– this world – I somehow felt awkward.
WOTCHER I said FANCY A CARLSBERG
but my mum she turned her nose up she
wasn't having any. Have it
your own way then, I said, but I'm
gonna get right tanked – I'm not sure this
livin' lark's for me.

Within
three and a half hours I'd soiled
my first nappy – Mum she
was gonna chuck it in the
bin but I howled
in pain and fury
and said – no way
you're gonna do that you
cow.

Sure nuff – by the time she'd
put a new nappy on me a guy from
The Tate was already
expressing an interest
In the old one –
"It has an unsettling honesty about it"
he said – studying it closely –
"And a very real – almost pungent sense of –
motion. Yes –
We'll have it."
Yup. I was on my way.
Let's have another Carlsberg.

"You're not like fuckin' relatin'
To me you arsehole. Burp"
I was at nursery school and
the Head Fascist was trying to get me
To paint a picture of a house what
A load of fuckin' drivel I wanted
To smash her head in but instead
I puked up over the drawing
pad.
Yugayugayugayugayugayuga
Yugayugayugayugayugading-dong!
ding-dong! ding-dong!
– Is that the school fuckin' door-bell
or what?

"There's a Mr Saatchi for Tracey"
Mouths the Deputy Fascist –
"He says he's heard she's produced
Something very real, very tangible –

TRACEY EMIN

Almost topographical in its sheer intensity –
Puke on white paper, 12" x 10".
He says he wants another dozen
like it
by Monday week
For his major new exhibition –
"The New Regurgitation".

Blue.
The sea is blue
And so is
The sky but
The clouds
are
White
And the grass is
A sort of
Yellowy-Orange
'Cos I just puked up over it.
Fancy another
Carlsberg
then?

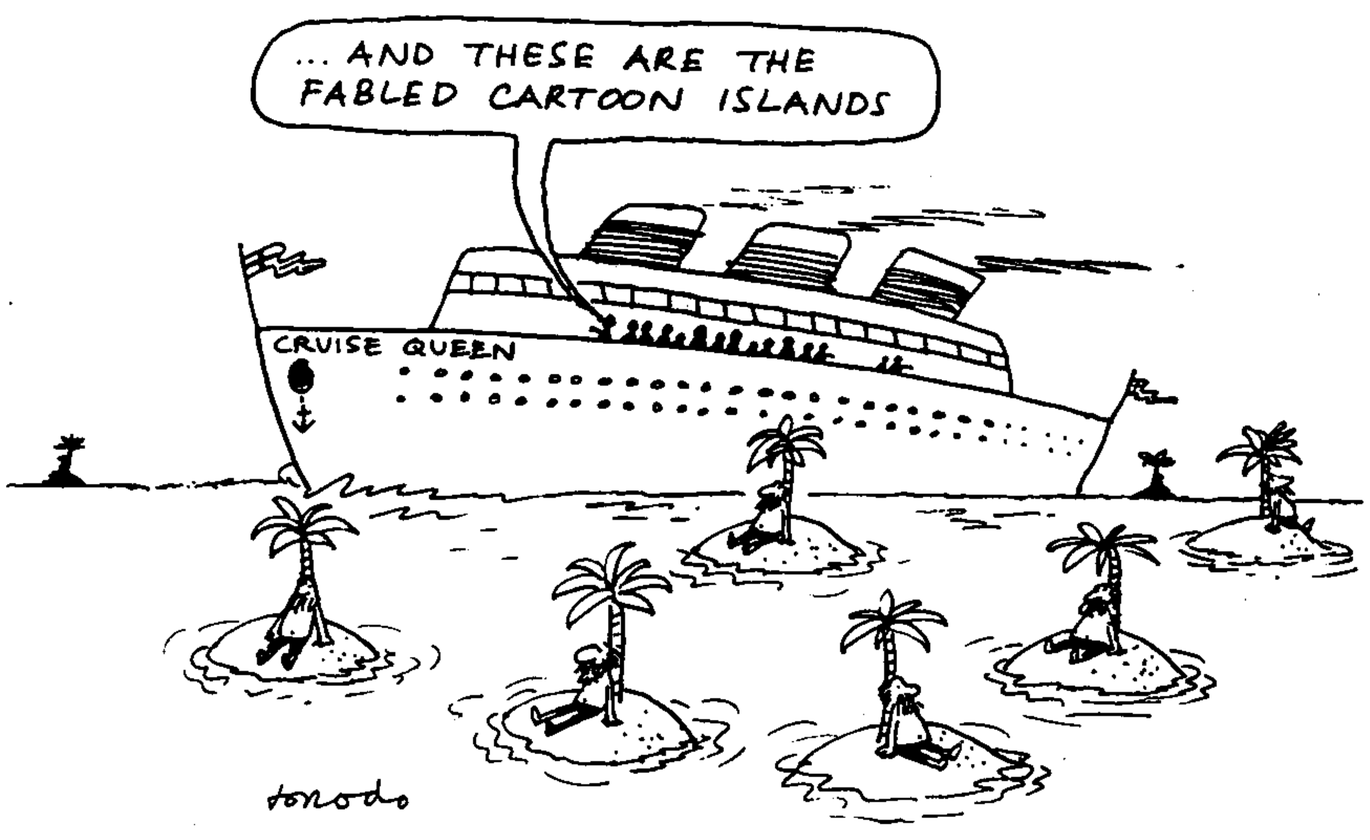
I opened up my sandwiches – the cheese was
sweaty and – the tomatoes had made the
bread go soggy – and I thought – I wish
I had put the Marmite on instead. Oh well.
At least it'll give me something to write
About.
Then –
Tringtringtringtringfuckintring
It's the telephone.
"Yeah? Who the fuck is it? Burp"
"It's Jay, Trace. Jay Jopling. I've
Got a collector who's mad for

That cheese and tomato
Sandwich you've just
created – for God's sake –
whatever you do –
don't bloody
eat
it.

– Bloody hell Jay
I say
– I just gone and tooken a
Bite off of it
– Spit it out, Trace
says Jay
– And we'll put it on
A plinth

And we'll call it "The cheese and tomato
Sandwich I chewed but didn't swallow"
We're talking
Forty grand, easy.
Carlsbergs all round.

"Puke –
Foetus – stains – masturbate –
Right pissed up – really fucked –
Spermshootineveryfuckinwhere"
– Yup, I'm being interviewed for a major
profile in
The Times
On the greatest artists of the 20th Century
"Willy – prick – penis – cock – tit
Outta my fuckin' head –
Bleedin' – gaggin' – wankin' – shittin' –
shaggin' "
– These days it's hard work being a great
artist,
'cos you have to market yourfuckinself
"Hang about, did I tell you
about my abortion – burp?
Blood – rape – piss – splatter – screw – have
you
got enough, then?"
– That Botticelli had it easy
What with all that fuckin' beauty and such.
Oh well – screw him.
Fancy another
Carlsberg
then?



London must use its ethical and cultural diversity to attract more inward investment, Tony Blair said yesterday.

Financial Times

Please Note

The discount on Classic FM Music Shop as advertised on page 17, is 10% and not 100% as stated.

Erratum slip, Classic FM brochure

With previous students numbering Spike Lee, Quentin Taranteatime, Robert Rodriguez, Jeremy Bolt, Whit Stillman, Phillippa Braithwaite, Guy Ritchie and Matthew Vaughn, Dov's record speaks for itself.

2-Day Film School publicity

Literary Review

BOOKER '99

DESPITE the by now traditional preliminaries of inaccurate leaks *(Evening Standard)* and whingeing over the size of the judging fee, the omens for this year's Booker shortlist were... surprisingly good.

Not only did we have a halfway decent jury (Gerald Kaufman, Shena Mackay, Professor John Sutherland, Boyd Tonkin and Natasha Walter), but rumour — traced back to stray remarks let fall by the judges at literary gatherings over the summer — hinted at a steely sense of resolve, the conviction that this year merit would out, wool wouldn't be pulled, and, no, Salman wouldn't be allowed on it just because several highly placed lackeys said he should.

So far so good. And indeed this year's shortlist shows a commendable desire to steer clear of the fashionable tat that habitually dominates it. No Rushdie (a turn-up, this, given Sutherland's previous public advocacy); no A.L. Kennedy; no Jim Crace. And yet the merest glance at the six darling volumes that did make it on to the list awakens an extraordinary feeling of déjà vu, the thought that, yes, most of the venerable Booker categories are firmly represented: the Indian one (Anita Desai's *Fasting, Feasting*); the South African one (J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*); the Irish one (Colm Toibin's *The Blackwater Lightship*); the Scottish one (Andrew O'Hagan's *Our Fathers*); the period drama (Adhaf Soueif's *The Map of Love*). Even Michael Frayn's *Headlong*, which tracks the progress of a long-lost painting, can be filed under the hoary Booker shelfmark of "novel of ideas".

One rarely expects youth to have its say in so serious an undertaking as the English novel — no reason why it should, either — but it won't perhaps be thought ungallant of me to suggest that Coetzee (born 1940), Desai (1937) and Frayn (1933) hardly stand at the cutting edge of late-twentieth century fiction. Or to point out that, at a time when handfuls of younger novelists are busily exploring concepts of "Englishness", to include only one book even vaguely set within these isles looks a mite niggardly. Yes, I *know*, all this stuff is supposed to have universal significance. Or is it? *Fasting, Feasting* is a novel examining the differences between India and Massachusetts, written by a woman who just happens to divide her time between India and, um, Massachusetts, while *Disgrace*, the work of a fiftysomething Cape Town professor, is about, er, a fiftysomething Cape Town professor.

Oh well, the gossip from the judging camp is as diverting as ever. This has it that the most conspicuous absentee — Timothy Mo's independently published *Renegade or Halo2* — divided up the jury along gender lines. Just as ten years back the feminist lobby did for Martin Amis's *London Fields*, so this year mesdames Mackay and Walter decided they couldn't take Timothy Mo's south-east Asian picaresque. There were also customary complaints about idle publishers declining to lobby for deserving novels beyond the two items each firm is officially allowed to submit: this apparently did for Howard Jacobson's Manchester table-tennis epic.

What will win? Not Coetzee (past winners never do). O'Hagan is a first-timer, which should disqualify him, although the *London Review of Books* connection will work in his favour. Desai has been shortlisted twice before, which is not always a good sign (see, for example, the deserving but ever unrewarded cases of Beryl Bainbridge and Justin Cartwright). There is a feeling abroad that it could be Michael Frayn.

Meanwhile, Bookworm's alternative list is as follows: Carol Birch's *Come Back, Paddy Riley* (Virago £9.99); Melvyn Bragg's *The Soldier's Return* (Sceptre £16.99); Robert Edric's *The Sword Cabinet* (Anchor £9.99); Giles Foden's *Ladysmith* (Faber £9.99); and Chris Paling's *The Silent Sentry* (Cape £9.99).

All of which naturally excludes the dozens of highly meritorious novels currently — major-league indifference being what it is — brought out by small presses, barely noticed in the national press and consequently unseen by most of the paying public. However, thinking of some of the things that could have been on the roster turned up by Mr Kaufman's team and weren't, let us console ourselves with the undoubted fact that it might all have been a great deal worse.

BOOKS & BOOKMEN

■ DORLING KINDERSLEY's *Star Wars: Incredible Cross-Sections* books may have been a phenomenal success but following the recent announcement of a somewhat bizarre internet initiative, many in the trade are asking the publisher for similar cutaway diagrams of chairman Peter Kindersley's fevered brain.

After a rough couple of years the latest results showed DK back on course to make massive profits following a huge redundancy programme and the "outsourcing" of many editorial functions to India. Such news, however unethically achieved, should have been enough to send the share price up a fair bit. But Kindersley managed to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory by adding, with great glee, that he was to put every page of his best-selling *Eyewitness* guides and the *Star Wars* series on the internet for free download, in a misguided attempt to grab a bit of the glory that the City is currently bestowing on the online sector.

Unfortunately investors don't share Kindersley's confidence and an initial 6p increase in the share price was more than countered by a 20.5p fall the next day.

■ LAST February Bookworm noted a number of astonishing similarities between the screenplay for the then newly-released and subsequently Oscar-winning *Shakespeare in Love* and a little-known and out of print book by Caryl Brahms and S.J.Simon, *No Bed for Bacon* (*Eye* 969).

A number of lengthy stories published in the nationals in the following days then featured some astonishing similarities with the small piece in the *Eye*.

Eight months later *No Bed for Bacon* is back on bookshop shelves in a new Black Swan edition, complete with new subtitle, "The story of SHAKESPEARE [sic] and LADY VIOLA in love". The back cover carries the line that it has been "out of print since 1985, but much-discussed in the press recently", while in a new foreword to the book Ned Sherrin, executor of Caryl Brahms's literary estate, gives an interesting insight into the genesis of the film project.

"Tom Stoppard borrowed a copy of *No Bed for Bacon* from me before he started work on Mark Norman's original screenplay in order to avoid duplicating the jokes in the classic novel."

As it happens Stoppard's jokes are alot funnier than Brahms and Simon's. Sherrin, however, cannot cast any light on the inspiration of Mark Norman for the plot. "He has been quoted as saying he got the idea from his son."

■ MORALE at Waterstone's is still plummeting as HMV Media md Alan "Weasel" Giles and his sinister Mekon-like henchman David Kneale have instigated a recruitment freeze. This has provoked a flurry of signed letters to the Bookseller from brave shopfloor staff. They argue, quite sensibly, that the pre-Christmas period is an idiotic time to stop recruitment, especially with overworked and underpaid colleagues leaving in droves.

Are the Weasel and the Mekon going to hire more booksellers? No. Instead they are considering making speaking or writing letters to the press an act of gross misconduct so that freedom of speech would become a sackable offence in a company once lauded for its response to employee feedback.

At head office the Mekon has unceremoniously sacked marketing director Martin Lee, with further departures expected soon.

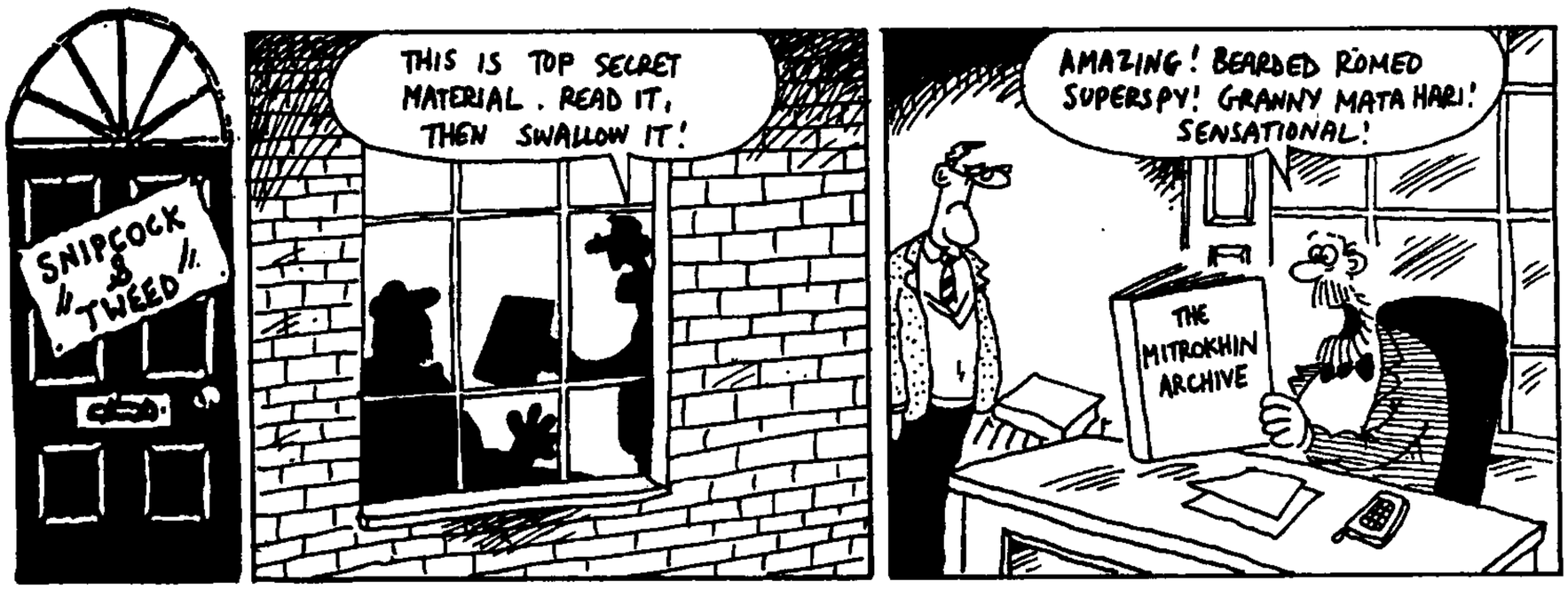
■ GENTLEMAN agent Anthony Sheil's various legal battles are not meeting with the success he hoped for, it seems.

The action he brought against his former business partner and keen amateur bamboo grower Sonia Land was defeated, leaving him with a hefty bill for both sides' costs. Next, Land shopped Sheil to the Inland Revenue over various tax irregularities, resulting in a further payout. Land herself was fined for previously withholding this information, but presumably she regards this as a small price for such sweet revenge.

Having paused to lick the wounds on his wallet, will Sheil now cut his losses in his Catherine Cookson-related legal feud with *Publishing News* (see *Eye* 982)? His lawyers once demanded "substantial compensation" and a "fulsome apology", but now perhaps he might be happy to let the matter go in exchange for a donation to the Catherine Cookson Trust and a "clarification".

'Bookworm'

William Shakespeare and Sir Walter Raleigh go into business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THE MITROKHIN ARCHIVE

IN THE BACK

MAN IN THE EYE

The Kaye catalogue

WHILE milords Sainsbury and Gavron grab the headlines, another of "new" Labour's big benefactors has escaped attention altogether: Isaac Kaye, who was listed as a donor in the party's 1997 accounts, but in the latest list (covering the period to December 1998) is demoted to the more modest-sounding "tickets for dinner" category.

However, a leaked memo from Labour's "High Value Funding" unit reveals that he donated £100,000 in June 1999, which represents a pretty big dinner even by the party's £500-a-head catering standards.

Kaye can certainly afford it. As deputy chief executive of the Florida-based IVAX corporation he earns $550,301 a year, plus options worth up to $1.5m. He is also chairman of its UK subsidiary, Norton Healthcare, the largest "generic drugs" company in Britain, which has lately expanded its operations to Ireland, Germany, Poland and even China. In London he lives in a luxury apartment in Grosvenor Square.

Even by Tony Blair's standards, Kaye is a pretty odd bedfellow for the Labour party. In 1996 his company was severely condemned by the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry for offering "unacceptable inducements" after it had promised mountain bikes and other goodies to pharmacists who increased their orders for Norton medicines. Any chemist buying £600-worth of the hay fever treatment Terfenadine Forte, for instance, would get £60 in Marks & Spencer vouchers — a clear breach of the industry's code of practice.

Why is the second in command of a huge US health company — which has a market capital value of $47.4bn — such a consistent friend of the People's Party? Kaye was doubtless pleased that IVAX's "Easi-Breathe(TM)" inhaler has been named as a millennium product by the government, but the presence of this asthma inhaler in the dome is probably not the main reason for his generosity.

IVAX and Norton Healthcare specialise in generic versions of prescription drugs, and have fought innumerable court battles to prise these out of the copyrighted grasp of the big pharmaceutical firms. Many of the drug giants object that generic manufacturers get to sell products without investing in the research to develop them — that, in short, they get something for nothing.

Looking at the massive profits made from the National Health Service by the primary manufacturers, it's hard to feel too much sympathy. This was certainly the attitude of Frank Dobson, who has ordered doctors to cut costs by prescribing cheaper generics. However, as spending has shifted to generic drugs, so (by the law of the market, naturally) their cost has risen almost to the level of the original copyrighted versions. In the last 12 months, for instance, the price of a pack of thyroxine tablets from Norton Healthcare has risen from £6.84 to an incredible £44.89. The result is that Isaac Kaye's firm earns a fortune, but the NHS doesn't make the expected savings. No wonder the IVAX share price rose by 80 percent in the last year.

IVAX and its subsidiaries are past masters at picking up something for nothing in the form of corporate welfare. In 1996-7, Norton Healthcare was offered £990,000 in "regional selective assistance" to set up a plant in London. Regional assistance to London is in itself unusual, as most money goes to the regions, for obvious reasons. But in October last year IVAX suddenly announced that it was "restructuring" its UK operations. This involved Norton closing its other plants in the south-east, moving the manufacturing and packaging operations to Waterford in Ireland — and cutting its workforce from 1,600 to 1,100 in the process. Kaye's firm thus gets government cash for new London offices in return for... job cuts.

IVAX's American chief executive Phillip Frost shed some crocodile tears about the redundancies. "We recognise the discomfort this restructuring will bring to affected employees and communities," he sighed, but added more cheerfully that restructuring promised "greater value to IVAX shareholders".

Which is good news for the biggest shareholder, a certain Phillip Frost. And for the second largest shareholder, Azure Ltd, which holds a stake worth $136 million on behalf of the Guernsey-based Charter Trust Company, an offshore outfit which is in turn the trustee of something called the I. Kaye Family Trust. Geoffrey Robinson would surely approve.

It need hardly be added that Kaye refuses to recognise any trade unio ns at Norton Healthcare, claiming that they are "not in line with company philosophy". Union-busting, job-cutting, NHS rip-offs and offshore trusts: welcome to the wonderful world of "new" Labour. When Isaac Kaye celebrates his 70th birthday, on 10 October, perhaps he will sing a chorus or two of The Red Flag.

AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATION

Total breakdown

JOHN MAXWELL (no relation), guiding light behind the sale of the Automobile Association, deserves a special place in the pantheon of modern business executives.

In 1993 he left BPB with a pay-off of £400,000. He was bound for the Pru, but sadly an unexpected reorganisation at the insurance giant left him without a job worthy of him. So he left again with a package worth £1.1m.

He was out of a job for several months before being snapped up in 1996 by the Automobile Association as its new chief executive. By his own standards the pay was modest — a mere £300,000 a year.

Now he is at the centre of the plan to sell the association, which is owned by its four million members, to Centrica, which used to be British Gas – his views on "demutualisation" having, er, evolved somewhat.

When in 1998 the American company Cendant applied to buy the AA's rival, the RAC, Mr Maxwell was himself an honorary member of the posh RAC Club in Pall Mall whose members stood to make £35,000 each if the deal went through. Nevertheless he declared himself "shocked" by the proposed sale and launched an expensive advertising campaign to woo disillusioned RAC members to the AA. Its theme was that a company owned by its members could provide better services at lower cost than an ordinary commercial company owned by shareholders.

"Mutuality is for us," John Maxwell told the Sun. "We see no reason to change." The Times of 9 May 1998 reported: "John Maxwell believes that it is possible to run an efficient mutual organisation which offers the best service for the lowest cost."

Whoops! Less than a year later and Mutuality John had became Profitability Jack. Without warning and without debate, the four million voting AA members were told that their committee had decided unanimously to sell the whole enterprise to Centrica.

Members were informed via a circular in August. It claimed that "the breakdown service market has undergone huge change in the last 18 months". For instance, "competitors have increased, with the largest now owned by commercial organisations with financial resources far greater than our own". This wasn't quite true. The takeover of the RAC had been referred to the monopolies and mergers commission, and has therefore been delayed for several months. Nor was there any mention in the circular of the vigorous opposition from the AA to the selling of the RAC, nor to the defence of its mutual ownership put up previously by the entire AA leadership.

The circular said unconvincingly: "The committee recently concluded that it could best serve the future interests of the AA by seeking the support of an organisation which not only shares the AA's values but also has the resources to fulfil the AA's ambition to provide the finest roadside services in years to come." And Centrica Group, which has never provided a single roadside service, "is just such an organisation".

The AA's grinding poverty was set out plainly on page 18. The value of cash and money investments had risen from £41m in 1997 to £223m in 1998. And net current assets were a creditable £149m. The accounts handsomely vindicate the views of the AA leaders last year: that they were running an efficient service on behalf of millions of members and were able to do so largely because those members own the organisation.

The problem for the committee and the Centrica predators was that there was not a shred of an argument for ending the successful mutual status of the AA, but somehow four million voting members had to be persuaded. So the committee came up with a brilliant strategy: bribery.

In a brief letter to members Sir Brian Shaw, AA chairman, estimated that "following completion of the sale" eligible members (all four million) "will receive approximately £240". Seven pledges by Centrica followed, all of them vague — except the last, which was very specific: "Centrica will pay each eligible member £240".

The result was predictable: 96 percent of AA members voted to take the money. Centrica has put up more than a billion pounds to fund this bribe, and its directors, who will include Sir Brian Shaw, now have to find the billion and make the new AA Corporation profitable by the only three means at their disposal: a) sacking people; b) cutting services; or c) raising charges. Strangely, none of these alternatives appears on the AA directors' glittering prospectus.

Demutualisation may have robbed AA members of any means of dissent, but there is now no longer any restriction on the inalienable right of the new corporation's directors to increase their salaries and dividends.

OFFICIAL SECRETS

MoD Con

SO, Melita Norwood is not going to be prosecuted for passing nuclear secrets to the Russians – but author Tony Geraghty is going to face the full force of the law for writing a book about Northern Ireland.

Unbelievably, the ministry of defence and its specialist police force, aka Modplod, have charged Geraghty under the official secrets act over a couple of pages on the subject of computer surveillance in his book *The Irish War*. No matter that this was not exactly the best kept security secret ever, Modplod is steaming ahead. It has even targeted publisher HarperCollins and has been hauling in its executives for heavy-handed questioning and absurd suggestions that they too might be charged.

Modplod has decided that HarperCollins should not release the paperback version of book, although it made no attempt to make the firm withdraw the hardback version, which remains on sale throughout the UK. Nor did they tell them to remove the "offending" passages. Nor is there any attempt to block its publication by John Hopkins University Press in the US.

Does this semi-privatised police force have any idea what it is doing? Meanwhile, the Modplod mole who first informed the Eye that Mr Geraghty had also been charged with possessing child pornography from the internet – found during the Modplod raid on his home – has not been so swift to tell us that those charges have since been dropped. News came courtesy of his local Hereford newspaper. Mr Geraghty's agent and copy-editor knew the material was research for his latest thriller involving witchcraft, bestiality and incest, and the crown prosecution service has decided it is "not in the public interest" to proceed.

How long will it take Lord Williams, the attorney general, to realise that neither is it in the public interest to proceed with ridiculous cases using the official secrets act?Or is it now official "new" Labour policy to empty the jails of known security risks, fail to prosecute self-confessed traitors and then instead try and bang up authors and publishers who are acting in the public interest?

CHILD ABUSE

Boyle's Law

CHILD abusers up and down the land must be cheered by the case of Massey Hall School, a residential home for children with learning disabilities in Cheshire.

Elaine Bowerman, a care worker at the Warrington school, first blew the whistle on the treatment of children as young as 13 as long ago as 1989. But it took four years to persuade Lancashire county council to launch an initial police investigation. Then, as with other notorious scandals – such as those in North Wales and Sunderland – the whistleblower was dismissed as a troublemaker, the children were disbelieved and the alleged abuser was able to carry on terrorising his young and vulnerable victims.

But Miss Bowerman persisted. In 1996 a second police investigation was instigated and last year 50-year-old, Robert Boyle was accused of 16 specimen charges of indecent assault on pupils between 1982 and 1995.

After a three-week trial a jury at Warrington crown court cleared Boyle. But his acquittal doesn't make Miss Bowerman and the pupils liars. It makes Boyle a lucky man. After he was "cleared" he went on to plead guilty to lying to Lancashire county council to secure his job. Critically he had failed to disclose that he had previous convictions in 1977 for six assaults on young cadets. As a "punishment" he had beaten the boys' bare buttocks with a baton and fondled their genitals on the pretext that it was for medical reasons – remarkably similar to the evidence given by the Massey Hall pupils. They described how Boyle had also handled their genitals in the showers, rubbing cream into them on the pretext of examining them for reasons of hygiene.

The jurors, quite properly, were not aware of Boyle's previous convictions for preying on vulnerable children. But neither were they furnished with all the evidence from Massey Hall. The prosecution only called a small sample of about 50 former pupils who claimed Boyle had assaulted them. They also failed to call the one staff member prepared to corroborate their stories – Elaine Bowerman, who had for years been trying to convince her union, Nalgo, the council and the police of both physical and sexual abuse in the home.

Miss Bowerman has shown the *Eye* her written account of abuse in the school. She claims some other staff members were aware of what was going on but were too frightened to speak out. She says that on more than one occasion she saw Boyle handling boys' genitals. She also saw him striking pupils on the face and head. Once she had seen brown fluff blowing across the school lawn and discovered it was a boy's hair that had just been pulled out by another senior member of staff. On another occasion she described seeing Boyle trying to insert a brush handle into a pupil's rectum. Boyle bullied and struck her when she protested and complained.

Damning evidence, it would seem. But Miss Bowerman was never allowed to put it before the court. It seems she became "tainted" because she had spoken to some of her former pupils during the second police investigation. The defence was able to suggest to the witnesses – who because of their learning difficulties were not capable of dealing with harsh cross-examination – that she had contaminated their evidence. Miss Bowerman has been given no chance to refute or explain this. She has never been able to give a public account of events at Massey Hall. She told the Eye: "I cannot describe what it is like to have to live with what I saw going on at that school."

Her anger is only exceeded by the disgust of the parents. One mother whose son was abused over a four-year period told the *Eye*: "I knew nothing about Boyle's trial or acquittal until it was too late. My son had given police a detailed account of what had happened to him – and he was never given a chance to tell it in court."

It seems the prosecution team which has successfully convicted several paedophiles in the on-going Cheshire homes cases was also confident of convicting Boyle and was surprised at the "not guilty" verdict. A crown prosecution service (CPS) spokesman said: "On the advice of leading counsel the witnesses were called who best supported the evidence in the case."

Where next for the parents? They resolved to battle on for justice via the civil courts. They hoped to learn more about events in Massey Hall by suing Lancashire county council for failing to protect their children. Crucially, they want to know why Boyle's background was not thoroughly investigated. After the first failed police investigation Boyle was promoted to act as head of care, while Miss Bowerman was dismissed.

Now they have been dealt another blow. Several families heard earlier this month that their legal aid was being withdrawn and they cannot afford to carry on the case themselves.

According to one mother, whose son gave an account of being both sexually and physically abused: "Our children have been branded liars and we have been silenced while Boyle is free to carry on his disgusting activities." Said another: "Money has never been the issue for us. It is about getting an apology and an acknowledgement that our children were abused and it is about ensuring Boyle can never do it again."

Slamming the civil court door in their faces leaves worrying questions about Massey Hall unanswered. What checks did Lancashire carry out on Boyle? Why did the first police inquiry fail to uncover his criminal past? What steps did Lancashire take to properly investigate Miss Bowerman's claims? What part in the dismissal of Miss Bowerman and the promotion of Boyle did Christopher Gleave, still head-teacher at Massey Hall, play?

In a statement to the *Eye* the council said Boyle had been sacked in 1997 – before his trial and acquittal – after police informed the authority of his failure to disclose his criminal convictions and of his false qualifications. It said: "At the time his employment began it was not possible for employers to conduct checks with the police on prospective employees...

"Massey Hall School has received a great deal of management support from Lancashire County Council. Since Mr Boyle's dismissal, both Ofsted and the Social Services Inspection Unit have inspected the school. The authority is satisfied with the standard of care and education provided for its pupils."

With the other families now fearing they too will lose their legal aid, they are now enlisting the support of their MPs to press for a public inquiry. Elaine Bowerman has already made similar pleas to ministers, including Tony Blair. To Jack Straw she wrote: "Do you know what really upsets me? I feel that these former pupils are being treated like this because of me – because I stuck to my guns over what I have seen at the school. What if I had not said anything about what was going on?"

What indeed? As one mother said: "This case stinks. The message we are giving people with learning difficulties or disabilities is that its okay to abuse them – they won't be believed and they won't be protected."

LAW REFORM

The rights man?

WHOM has the Law Society chosen to head its new taskforce on the long overdue human rights act 1998, which comes into force next year? Step forward David McIntosh, senior partner of the London law firm Davies Arnold Cooper.

Writing about his new role in the *Law Society Gazette*, he admits he is "someone who is not best known as a human rights campaigner". True. But he does know all about human rights abuses.

He and his company represent the UK-based Cape plc, which for 50 years took full advantage of apartheid in South Africa to run huge asbestos mines and mills in Northern Cape and Northern Province (*Eye* 983). Despite the dangers of asbestosis exposure being well-known — regulations were introduced in the UK in 1931 — thousands of South African workers were given little or no protection.

A government health inspector reported in 1965 seeing very young black children being used to trample down "fluffy amosite asbestos, which all day long came cascading over their heads. They were kept stepping down lively by a burly supervisor with a hefty whip. I believe these children to have had the ultimate of asbestos exposure." (*See Article 2 of the Human Rights Convention — Right to life; Article 3 — Freedom from inhuman or degrading treatment; and Article 14 — Freedom from discrimination.*)

Now worried about having to pay out up to £80m in compensation to 2,000 South Africans who are sick and dying from asbestosis and lung cancers, Cape is trying to block them from suing in this country. Cape has so far successfully maintained that the cases should be heard in South Africa, though this is to be challenged in the Lords. In South Africa, of course, Cape will have the upper hand — some workers will be hampered by restricted legal rights and none will have a chance of obtaining legal representation on a par with that available to a wealthy multi-national. (See Article 6 — Right to a fair trial.)

Davies Arnold Cooper also represented giant mining corporation RTZ, fighting a claim by Edward Connelly, who alleges he developed throat cancer as a result of working in one of the company's uranium mines in Namibia. As with Cape, RTZ tried to block Mr Connelly from suing in the UK on the grounds that Namibia was the more appropriate forum. In his ruling against RTZ, the then master of the rolls Lord Bingham cited international obligations under Article 6. However RTZ's legal team has since persuaded the high court that Mr Connelly's claim had been launched too late and fell foul of legal time limits.

Asked how Mr McIntosh was appointed, a Law Society spokesman said the new legislation affects all areas of litigation — not simply those alleging breaches of the convention. "David McIntosh is a highly regarded litigator and that is why he was appointed."

HIGH PRINCIPALS

Unbolting the Stables door

TERRY ASHURST, principal of Doncaster College, is trying to find out who among his staff might have blown the whistle on the Stables, a £1m commercial conference centre he has built at the college.

His bizarre investigation centres around the words "personal fiefdom", used in these pages to describe the regime run by Ashurst and his wife Nina, the college's head of personnel. A furious Ashurst has asked his managers to identify those among his staff who might coin such a phrase.

The *Eye* does not usually reveal its sources, but in this case it seems only fair to put Ashurst out of his misery. The phrase was in fact borrowed from none other than David Blunkett, the education secretary, who used it to describe the unaccountable way the heads of some Oxbridge colleges operate.

Ashurst would perhaps do better to address the questions being raised about the Stables and the company that runs it rather than hunting down dissidents. Doncaster councillor Sheila Mitchinson has already asked if the Stables is carrying out the function for which it was granted planning permission. Officially, the company Waterdale Training Enterprises Limited provides vocational training and education, but it seems to be almost exclusively a front for the conference, restaurant and wedding facilities at the Stables.

More serious is the involvement of her fellow councillor, E.E. "Ted" Jones. Cllr Jones is a director of Waterdale Training Enterprises Limited and a governor of the college, but has failed to register either position in the Doncaster metropolitan borough council register of interests. Cllr Jones also sits on the employment, policy and finance sub-committee — the most powerful college governors' committee. The college's recent purchase of property from the council — the former Hallcross School & Beechfield School — raises clear conflict of interest issues for Jones.

In the City

ULTRA-RESPECTABLE Cable & Wireless is in business with two of the biggest peddlers of phone sex services who make millions out of hardcore dial-a-porn.

The British-based telecoms giant is providing its international network to carry services including phone filth sold at rip-off rates to heavy breathers around the world. These services are provided by Robert Green and Marilyn Shein who run Hamilton Telecommunications. Green and Shein are longtime major players in the booming phone porn business.

Last year Hamilton signed a deal with C&W to use international telephone numbers with the Panama dialling code which can be utilised to peddle porn. C&W runs the Panama telephone system. As a result men all over the world are now able to dial up the Panama numbers and listen to whatever turns them on.

Any porn calls do not in fact go to Panama but are rerouted by C&W to banks of recorded messages or "live rooms" in Britain, the United States and other countries. The lucrative profits are split between the punters' telecom company, C&W, Hamilton and the companies who provide the tapes and "live rooms".

Green and Shein used to do business with British Telecom as the international network for similar numbers provided by the telecom company for war-torn Sierra Leone. But exposure of that link in 1996 seems to have ended that relationship. The calls to Sierra Leone numbers are now carried by a subsidiary of Teleglobe Canada. Green and Shein have also negotiated a deal with the telecom company for Madagascar.

The money to be made from phone sex is enough to arouse any investor. Hamilton's turnover was £3.6m in 1997 and £6.1m last year. Green and Shein were able to share fees of £1.75m. And now they are hoping to sell Hamilton — an Irish-registered company based on the septic Channel isle of Sark — for more than £6m.

The deal has been done with an American "shell" company, Symposium Corporation, listed on the US over the counter market. By remarkable coincidence one of Symposium's directors is Adam Bishop, who when he worked for BT had dealings with Green and Shein's Sierra Leone operations .

More significantly Symposium's chief executive is none other than that old Eye favourite Rupert Galliers-Pratt, whose lacklustre business career — Lightship, Princess Resources and a string of failed private companies — has never stopped him living well.

Symposium is no exception. "RPG" has negotiated a £215,000 a year consultancy agreement plus car expenses of more than £1,000 a month. He also has 200,000 options at $1 a pop. The shares are almost $6. And a Bermuda-based trust for his children holds a 9 percent stake worth more than £4m.

No doubt because in the US regulations for non-disclosure are stricter than here, this time "RPG" has not repeated his 1996 mistake of omitting his less successful ventures from Symposium documents. He was censured by the Stock Exchange for this "oversight" in the Optical Care (now LOOX) prospectus after this was exposed by the *Eye*.

Under "RPG" and his associates Symposium is putting together a series of deals for shares and cash. The Hamilton deal is dependent on the company raising the initial £3.5m purchase price. London brokers T. Hoare have been helping by locating investors. Those with a knowledge of the "RPG" talent for wealth redistribution are unlikely to share his enthusiasm for phone sex or Symposium.

PHONEY pharaoh Mohamed Fayed's vendetta against former Harrods security boss Robert Loftus, whose disclosure of the break-in at rival "Tiny" Rowland's safe deposit box could cost him his beloved British passport, is proving very expensive.

Two weeks ago Fayed was forced to settle a libel action brought by Loftus over an *Observer* article, under his name but written by his mouthpiece Laurie Mayer. This is believed to have cost Fayed "generous damages" of more than £50,000. The Absurder is understood to have had to pay a further £10,000-plus.

But that may not be the last Loftus bill. Fayed may also be faced with further claims related to the illegal "hacking" into Loftus's bank accounts to obtain details of payments he received from Rowland after he revealed what had happened following his sacking from Harrods.

Meanwhile Fayed is still delaying judgment on the damages to be paid in the case brought by Rowland's widow over the safe deposit break-in. Fayed surrendered to judgment and abandoned any defence to the claim from the Rowland estate almost a year ago. Since then he has been engaged in legal manoeuvres designed to avoid having to answer questions about the repeated break-ins and the removal of Rowland's possessions from the Harrods box.

Fayed's reasoning is not hard to see. He is seeking a judicial review of home secretary Jack Straw's decision to refuse him British citizenship. One of Straw's two reasons was the Rowland box affair. Fayed has always claimed there was only one break-in and that he knew nothing about it beforehand, putting all the blame on Loftus. Given the withdrawal of his claim against Loftus as part of the Rowland case surrender and the recent libel settlement this is increasingly difficult.

Having a high court judge find that he was behind the repeated break-ins and make him pay damages of maybe £1m may not help his cause with the judicial review.

Nor may the looming law lords appeal over the libel case against him brought by Neil Hamilton over the thousands Fayed says he paid the disgraced former Tory MP. This is due to be heard in October so that the trial can go ahead in November.

If Hamilton is allowed to sue Fayed by the law lords, rejecting the pharaoh's claim that the matter has already been decided in his favour by the parliamentary commissioner, then the passport case will also take a big knock. More likely if the lords say the Hamilton show must go on is that Fayed will walk away as he did in the Rowland case.

TWO NAMES were missing from the Serious Farce Office announcement of corruption charges involving two former senior Co-Operative Wholesale Society executives. But it seems that this omission may be corrected by the time Allan Green and David Chambers appear in court next January charged with receiving £1m each for extending a supply contract to food firm Hobson.

The first missing name is that of the man behind

The Enterprise Culture

Hobson — Andrew Regan, the ambitious dealer in stolen CWS documents. Regan has taken himself off to Monaco since his 1997 £1.2bn bid for CWS collapsed. His merchant bank advisers Hambros were this month fined £350,000 for using the stolen papers to make the bid.

Those charged with corruption are usually charged with corruptly receiving a benefit. But that requires someone to have corruptly given that benefit. That person is obviously not Hobson's lawyer Paul Thomas who has been charged with aiding and abetting the corruption.

But aiding and abetting whom if not Hobson? And if for Hobson for who other than Regan?

The answer to that question can undoubtedly be provided by the other missing name — Ronald Zimet, whose offshore company Trellis International received £2.4m from Hobson in return for facilitating the CWS contract extension and from which came the £2m it is said went to Green and Chambers.

As reported in Eye 975, Zimet has been seeking from Israel to cut an immunity deal with the SFO in return for telling what he knows about the Hobson payment. It would seem that perhaps this deal is not yet in place.

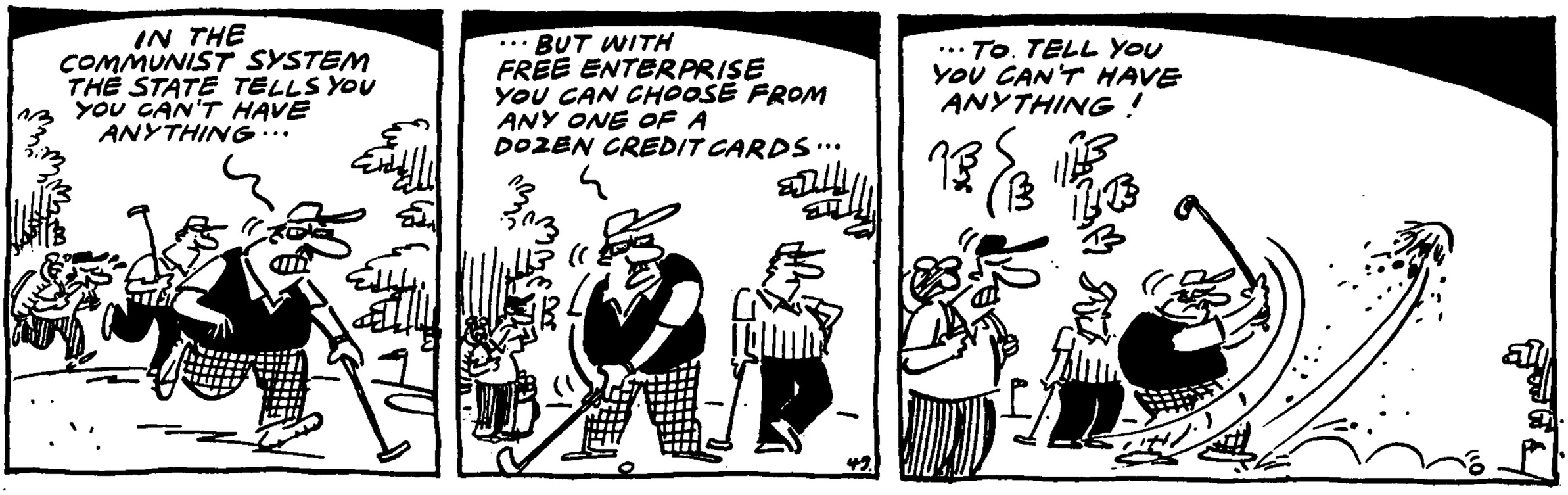
Could it be that the unusually long delay until January is to enable the SFO to do a deal with Zimet in order to deal with Regan or vice versa?

THE COLLAPSE at TransTec — losses, no dividend and shares at 14p — could well create no little difficulty for the Orion Trust of the Guernsey Family Geoffrey Robinson. The former paymaster-general's offshore trust has now lost almost £10m on its near £11m purchase of TransTec shares in 1996. It is also going to lose its tax free income of more than £400,000. All of which raises questions if the trust borrowed to make the purchase and now has both reduced security and no income to pay any interest. It also shows once again what a bad investment TransTec was for the supposedly "independent" Orion trustees. A point which may yet interest the Inland Revenue. Meanwhile ever generous Geoffrey is unlikely to allow this little setback — his personal dividend income is also about to take a £475,000 knock — to spoil his hospitality at this week's Labour party conference.

'Slicker'

THE DIRECTORS

DREDGE/RIGG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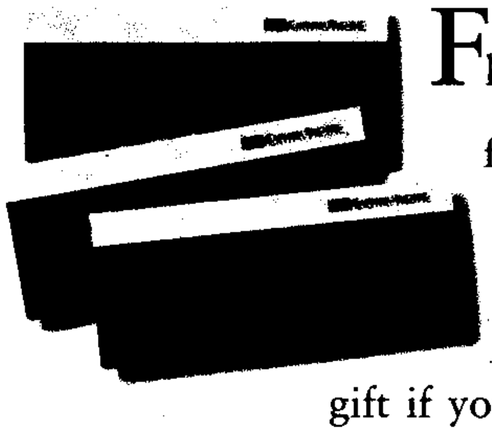

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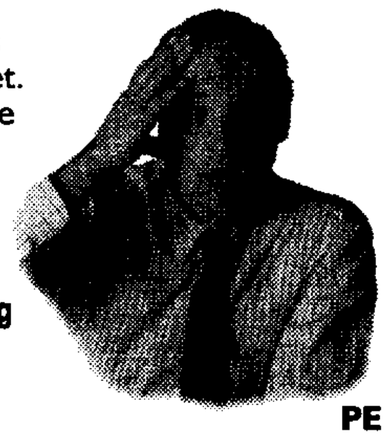

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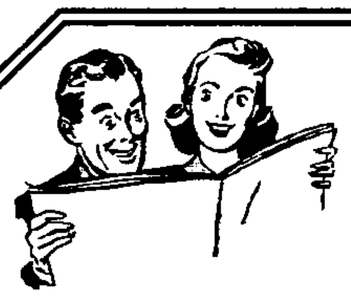

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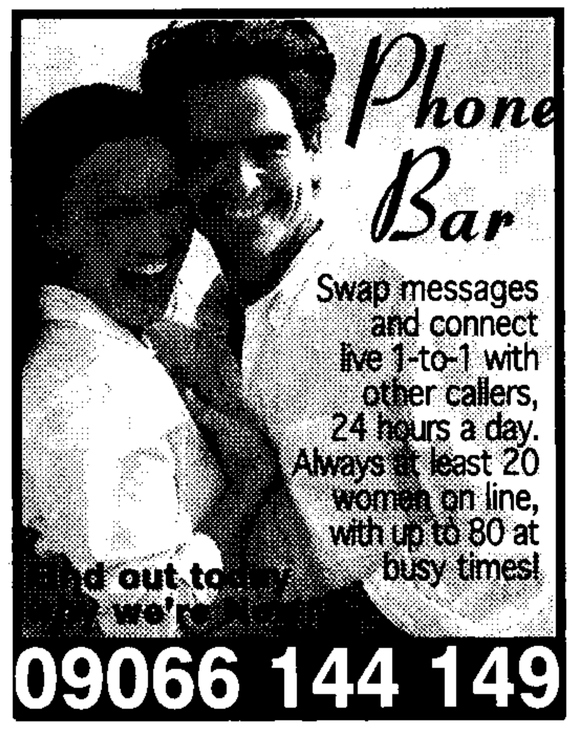

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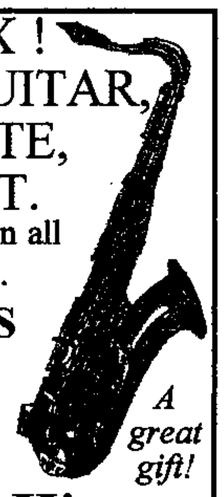

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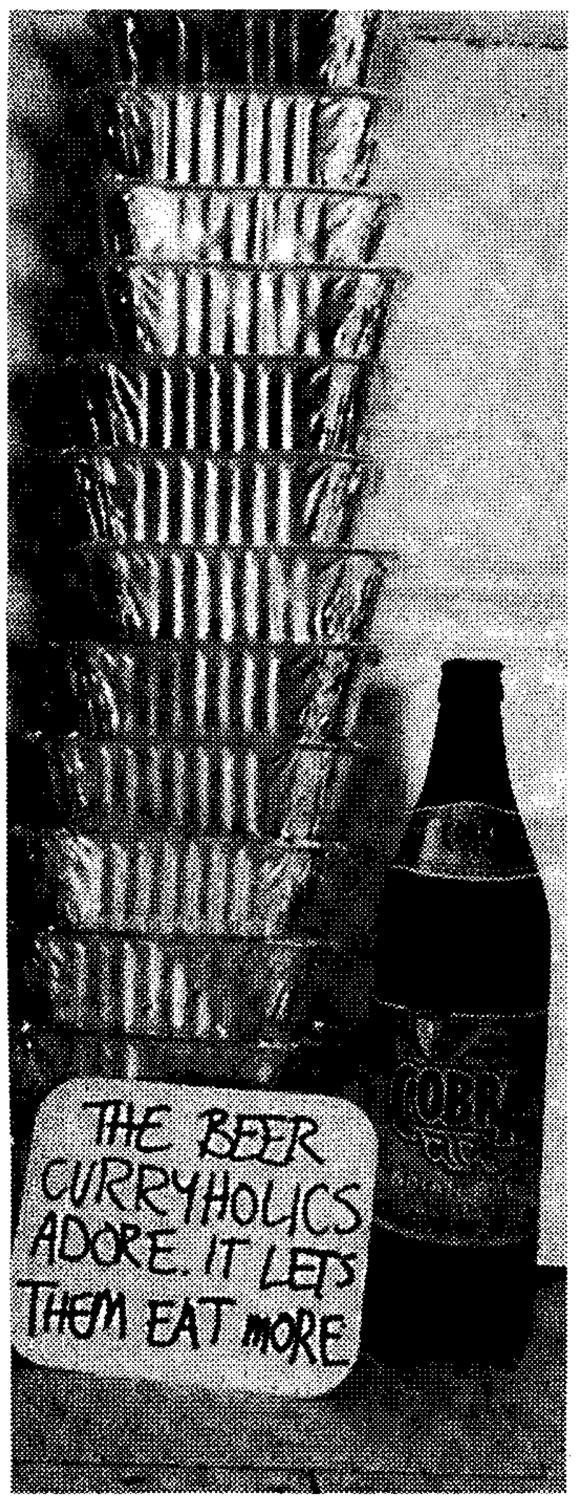

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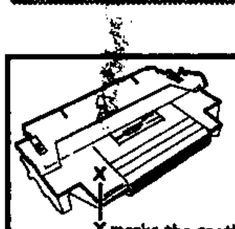

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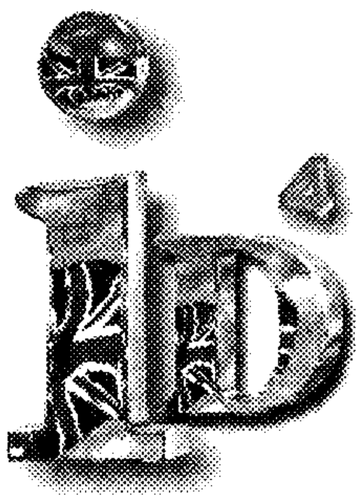

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SATANIC ABUSE SURVIVOR seeks pension. Bless you. B.o.S. code 12 22 10, account 00615088.

SINGLE DAD desperate to give 11 year old son the chance his talents deserve. £5000 would secure home and future. Nationwide 07 00 30, 60921362. Thank you from our hearts.

DEPOSIT/FUNDS PLEASE. Homeless students. Barclays code: 20 05 06, Account 30302066.

HELP FREE NURSING student from wheel of debt. Barclays 20-24-61, 40735833.

DEVOTED DAD, 21, single – grateful for anything. 40 40 03, 41668404. Thankyou.

CLASSICAL PIANIST, successful artistically, not financially. £1000 in debt – grateful for any help so can continue this career. Band of Scotland 16-25-14, Ac/No 10039780.

THE THIEF LEFT IT behind. The moon, at the window. 30 90 43, 0544796.

LOYAL SON borrowed £30,000 to hope father's business. Now collapsed. Pack descending. FD, 40-47-84, 92585286.

FILIPINO LADYBOY needs £3,500 for operation to change him to her. Barclays 20-49-76, 00315893.

ARTIST/LECTURER and daughter, desperate and destitute, need help to rebuild lives after years of husband's abuse: Co-operative Bank 08-93-00, 2105674556.

REPOSSESSING OUR HOME please, please help us. Sainsbury 12-60-06, 07281331.

DESPERATE LOVING father struggling to hold on to home and contact with children. Please help. Thanks. Barclays 20-27-48, 5023365.

DESPERATE MEDICAL student urgently needs £11,000 to complete *medical* degree. Please help. Thank you. Midland 40-43-04, 61341316.

AMERICAN BENEFACTOR needed for young poet travelling Deep South. Imogensalt@hotmail.com

HELP DESPERATELY needed to finance remedial therapy for child suffering from developmental disability. Barclays 20-87-94, 70548820.

GRADUATE URGENTLY requires funds for clothing for first job. Halifax 00165320, Code 11-04-11.

I HAVE LEAD an honest life, helped charities, kind to cats etc. Due to sad circumstances *I* owe £13,000 and need your kind help. HSBC 40-47-31, 11621513.

PLEASE HELP two star-crossed lovers unite. One Aussie, one Brit. Need donations for airfare. Box 1886.

IMPOVERISHED IDIOT needs £22.75 to pay for this ad. Wicked. MIDLAND 404404 31406388.

WOULD A KIND and generous person please help me with funding my son's urgent operation. Working all hours but now very tired. Sincere. Thanks Barclays 20 49 11, 60584568.

MATURE STUDENT seeks life of Riley. Please help. Nationwide 07 00 30 53976097.

PLEASE HELP. Only 22 but £17k in debt. Thanks. 60-01-17 52441598.

DESPERATE. Massive debts. Grateful for any donations. RBS 83-15-26, 00256510.

ACROBAT DESIRES financial flexibility during year at circus school All gifts appreciated. Please help. HSBC 40-22-07, 61167960.

RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION needs £6000 to fund legal battle against developer. Lloyds 30-94-97, 1696096 http://members.xoom.com/off side2001/

GREAT IDEA – travel for the future! Creative designer needs £20,000 for the research and development of an ELECTRIC TRIKE. Please help make a great idea become a reality. Thank you. Box 2085.

HEART ATTACK 1990. Business collapsed owing £25,000. Still owe £2,000 but now have cancer. Can't leave 67 year old wife with this debt. Please give to Halifax 11-04-69 account 00163177.

UNJUST – A VOLUNTARY organisation dealing with criminal appeals, welfare, housing – seeks volunteers for casework, and fund-raising. Legal or welfare skills an advantage. All donations much appreciated. INTERESTED? 0171 701 9955, e-mail: unjust@callnetuk.com, fax: 0171 702 4888.

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GLOUCESTERSHIRE, assertive male, 49, 6'1", 12st, into rambling, films, chamber music, red wine, food, theatre, books, Internet, and indoor games too, seeks agreeable educated slim independent lady to cherish and direct. Box 0186.

BOOKISH GUY, 50, 6ft, n/s – seeks woman of shape, wit and warmth for Dorset dalliances. Box 0486.

SEMI-DETACHED, 40s male, 6ft, fit, not fat, gsoh, good company, quite stylish with generous nature – seeks size 10 elegant lady, 40+ with sof. London/South East. Box 0786.

JEFF GOLDBLUM lookalike seeks slim, salacious siren for discreet friendship, fun and frolics. London M40/M4. Box 0986.

ASSERTIVE, BEAUTIFUL female, 29, seeks unassertive Gentleman, age unimportant, for erotic liaisons. Box 1086.

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ASSERTIVE, HANDSOME entrepreneur, M/40 – seeks sleek, younger, unassertive, erotically inclined f/partner. 07050 398943.

DORSET MAN, 45, ND, NS, own house, car, in work, scared by fire, rejected by local women. Any offers romance welcome. Box 1186.

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SENSUAL MAN, 27, seeks sexy lady for intimate encounters. London/SE. Box 2084.

LONDON MAN, 35, 6'3", green socialist, but could be accused of double standards, seeks unattached beautiful young woman for motorcycle excursions to pollute the environment. Recent photo please. Box 2086.

PORTLY, PROFESSIONAL, PhD, 34, no ties, seeks intelligent lady, 20-55, for the arts, conversation and companionship. Teeside area. Email romance. Box 2186.

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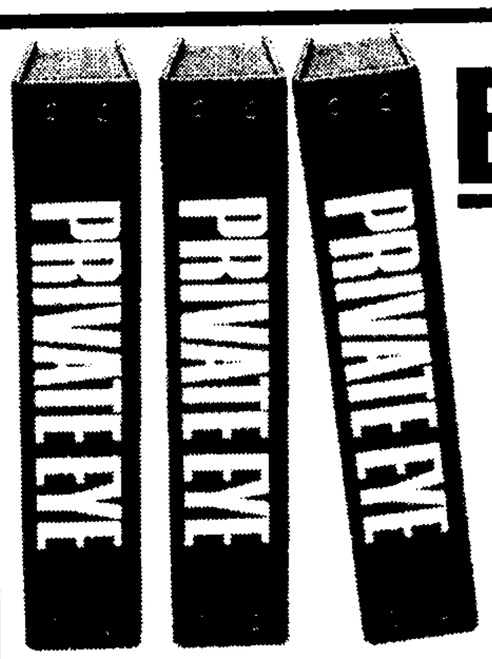

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